



**International Association of  
Peer Supporters  
(iNAPS)**

<http://www.inaops.org>

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# Reinforcing Our Roots: Defining Our Future

**SAVE THE DATE! DECEMBER 3-5, 2018  
12th Annual Conference**

**Doubletree Inn by Hilton at the Entrance to Universal  
Studios**



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## Peer Support, INAPS and Florida

Mike Weaver, iNAPS Co-President

As we plan for our next conference in Orlando, Florida, It is appropriate, to acknowledge the many students and teachers who lost their lives or were wounded in Parkland, Florida this past week and may be experiencing great emotional pain. First responders and hundreds of other community members will feel this loss for a long time. Despite the fact that there are many qualified therapists in this area, peer support can be very helpful in situations like this-people who have experienced serious trauma in their lives and have developed resiliency through the events. Significantly, the Florida Board of Certification has done an excellent job of providing a specific certification for Peer Support with a designation of Y for Youth. That means that a person who holds the CRPS-Y credential must be between the ages of 18-29 at the time of application and attests to lived experience as a person who, between the ages of 14-25 experienced a significant life challenge and is now living a wellness and/or recovery oriented lifestyle for at least two years. We hope that certified peers will be a part of this community's healing.

After a great listening session at our last business meeting, we are endeavoring to address the major areas that were in most need. Much of this work takes place in these committees, over the phone and through zoom. We are still a young association and have high aspirations to meet the hopes and needs of those in the peer support profession internationally and in the United States. We look forward to announcing several new initiatives in our next release. We are increasingly more organized but have not lost the passion for recovery, wellness and peer support relationships. We realize how important our work is and as I learned in a training years ago, "Peer support is about relationship and all about relationship." As Pat Deegan reminded us, "to be a peer supporter means: to work at the intersection of love and outrage."

Parkland, Florida reminds us of that.

# **Announcing Our Next Webinar**

(Webinar #35)

## ***Culture, Inclusion and Microaggressions in Peer Support***

**with Cathy Cave**



***March 23 Noon - 1:00 pm EST***

***[Join WebEx meeting](#)***

***Meeting number (access code): 649 479 745***

***Meeting password: optum***

***Join by phone:***

***1-763-957-6300 US/Canada (Preferred) | [Global call-in numbers](#)***

***[Can't join the meeting?](#)***

# Welcome to Orlando!

On behalf of the hundreds of Floridians working as peer specialists, we look forward to welcoming you to 12<sup>th</sup> annual International Association of Peer Specialists conference in Orlando, December 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>. Florida is the birthing ground for many of our national peer leaders and has enjoyed a long history of peer support in diverse settings. Our certification is for individuals in recovery from a mental health and/or substance use condition with endorsements available for lived experience as a Veteran, Family, or Youth.



We are excited to be the host state for this year's conference and have the opportunity for our peer specialists to join with you in reinforcing our roots and designing our future. Early December may be the best time to conference in Florida! The tourist crowds are gone and sunshine still prevails. While much of the US will be spending their December nights dodging from cold weather, you'll get to network by the palm tree lined pool and have access to Universal Studios. During the day, you'll hear from motivating keynotes and learn from peers and allies how to implement best practices, overcome challenges, and embrace opportunities with creativity and innovation. You won't want to miss this opportunity to recharge and be re-inspired to continue this important work.

I hope to meet you in person this December! Until then, keep partnering for wellness and recovery.

[Dana Foglesong](#)

Director, Recovery and Resiliency Services  
Magellan Complete Care



# All My Bags are Packed; I'm Ready to Go!

**Martha Barbone, Conference Chair**

Orlando in early December! Average daily temperatures in the mid 70's, sunshine, palm trees....

I have lived in Michigan, Colorado, Indiana, New York, Maine, Massachusetts and Italy, and I do like the snow. But, the idea of getting away from 40 degrees and grey skies with possible snow showers even for a few days has me excited! It's even better that I will be able to enjoy this get away with old friends and hopefully make many new friends while learning new things at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual iNAPS Conference.

This year the theme for our conference is "Reinforcing Our Roots: Designing Our Future". We have seen the number of people working or volunteering in peer support growing every year. We are now in many diverse environments including inpatient, outpatient, primary care, emergency and crisis, respites, group living environments, forensic environments, homeless services and more. Our approach is holistic concentrating on whole health and we are trauma-informed. We work in peer-run organizations and also as part of multi-disciplinary teams.

As we move forward by leaps and bounds it is important not to forget our roots and that we are a part of the Human Rights Movement. It is important to know our history for many reasons including:

- Knowing where we came from and our movement's many successes (especially as told by those who were there!)
- Understanding some of our challenges (past, present, and future)
- Knowing that we are a part of something bigger and why that is important
- Knowing how we connect to other movements and people/groups
- Informing us on how we move forward from here

Our 'movement' goes by many names and may best be regarded as many different movements that are interconnected with one another. Some of the names for our movement have included:

- Mental Patient Liberation Front
- Consumer/Survivor/Ex-patient (or C/S/X) Movement
- Peer Movement
- Recovery Movement

We have learned a great deal from the twelve-step movement, especially about the value of peer-to-peer support. It can also be very important and useful for our movement to recognize how we have been impacted by and can learn from the civil rights movement in our country, as well as other movements including the Women's Movement, the Cross-Disability Movement, and those related to sexuality and gender identity. One thing to note is that we have not done a great job of making our own movement welcoming to people of color, trans people, people with different abilities (deaf people, etc.) and so on, and that a lot of work remains to better understand all of these interactions.

Recently, Darby Penney wrote a blog titled **Who Gets to Define "Peer Support?"**. This is a great topic for discussion as we move forward "Designing Our Future." The blog can be found on Foundation for Excellence in Mental Health Care <http://www.mentalhealthexcellence.org/gets-define-peer-support/?omhide=true> or on Mad In America, <https://www.madinamerica.com/2018/02/who-gets-to-define-peer-support/>

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## **The Silent Epidemic of Silence: Mental Illness, Sexism, Social Justice, Life, Support and Disability**

**Ahmad Aborjadeh**

Most, if not all epidemic's are silent when they come to minorities. We are killed, hunted down by both law enforcement and citizens of a nation that sees us as visitors despite our years and generations here. By minorities I am not only speaking about Black, and Brown individuals. I am also speaking about the First Nation People, individuals with disabilities, Femmes and non cis-gendered Males, and many others that do not fit the Wealthy White Catholic Able-Bodied Males that are the true beneficiaries to the systems in place to oppress us. Our epidemic's are silent, with a ravenous and biased media washing our stories away and replacing them with those of fear, and entertainment.

But there's an epidemic that we rarely speak about. Silence.

When a community is traumatized, like each and every single one of ours is, it's important to heal our wounds collectively and individually to move on.

This requires many things: support from top to bottom, acknowledgment, empowerment, changing the environment that caused the trauma, and change. All of these are extremely linked, but none can happen without acknowledgement.

Unless we acknowledge our collective pain, addressing that it is in fact real, and we have the

right to our pain, we will not heal.

We are denied our trauma, and at times our existence.

I grew up in a country that wouldn't acknowledge the existence of my people or the genocide and atrocities committed against them by a settler state, simply because that state is their ally, and they did the exact same thing. I grew up in a world where my name had to change because when anyone tried pronouncing it they made it sound like a bomb threat. I grew up in a world where I yelled, and screamed, and clawed my way begging anyone to see the Mental Illnesses and trauma in my life, and the collective answer was no. I grew up in a world where I had to fear law enforcement and the citizens those law enforcement could've supposedly protected me from. I grew up in a world that did not want me. I grew up in a world where it didn't matter that we were all dealing with the same oppression, we looked away, hid our scars, and smiled in public to avoid any kind of conflict. I grew up in a world filled with more fear than hope, and a world that was ultimately not created for me.

And when I grew older I was asked to justify my existence everyday. Asked to justify my mental illness, suicidality, need for education, lack of terrorism, the color of my skin, my orientation, my pain, and my trauma. People of color and Femmes are rarely taken seriously, and we are constantly asked for facts and figures about our oppression, abuse and trauma.

But we are conditioned to believe that our suffering is shameful. That when we are raped, bullied, or suffer from anything, we need to hide it. We need to hide it, act like it never happened, and forget about it.

And as communities we shame survivors and pray for the abusers.

We forgive, and we forget, without ever asking for justice, or supporting the individuals that wake up in the middle of the night with tears streaming down their faces.

And when the survivors try to take charge of their lives, we are ostracized, and abused again and again, and we're told that we are the ones bringing shame and pain to our communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are in pain. If you're not then great, but chances are, more often than not, you are, or at the very least those around you are. We struggle, and we are not being heard. We are not being supported. And for us, all of us to heal, we need you to see, and listen to us.

If that's not enough to convince you then hear this. Today, we do not suffer alone. Sexual assault victims do not suffer alone, black men being murdered by police officers with their hands in the air do not suffer alone. We pray for families, and friends of the victims and survivors, but we all suffer. We have built a network of visibility into each others lives that allows trauma to transcend personal experience. Through computer screens, phones, visuals

and writings we all feel the gun shots, the unasked for touches, and everything else. We do not suffer exactly like the victims and the survivors, but each and every single one of us feels the trauma in one way or another, and it has made its way into every area of our societies.

Systems of oppression make acknowledging our collective pain difficult, because once we acknowledge our pain, and begin healing from it we challenge the system, and the system is not infinite. It can end. We can uproot it, and build non-oppressive societies like we've had in the past. Many individuals disagree with the Black Lives Matter movement, but regardless of your thoughts at the very least it has brought a community together, and allowed them to acknowledge the pain and trauma they deal with every single day. Ultimately, validation is revolutionary, and that's what the BLM movement has done.

We still have a long way to go, but acknowledging that we're in pain, and this pain is literally killing us in some situations is the beginning to healing from wounds we collectively carry, and carry on our own.

In the end of the day, we must heal, not recovering is not an option when we seek to eradicate these systems of oppression.

Originally published Feb 6, 2018 at Life in My Days <https://www.lifeinmydays.com/>

*Ahmad is the Founder and Executive Director of Life in My Days. An engineer, world traveler, peer support specialist, novelist and lifetime member of iNAPS.*

## **Announcements:**



**World Federation For Mental Health's  
International Trauma Summit  
November 28 - 30, 2018  
Houston, TX**

Join WFMH for the International Summit on Trauma in Houston on Nov 27-30, 2018 to begin a dialogue about trauma policy recommendations for countries and International NGOs (Non Governmental Agencies or non-profits). And we will develop a call to action on the last day.



SAVE THE DATE:

Mental Health National Youth Convergence

August 6-8th 2018 in Washington, DC



DARTMOUTH

The Dartmouth Centers for Health and Aging is initiating the first national survey of trained Certified Peer Specialists to help us understand how to develop a peer intervention that uses technology to guide peers as they teach people with mental illnesses how to take care of both mental health and physical health conditions at the same time. For example, this intervention could teach someone with bipolar disorder and diabetes how to manage these conditions.

We're asking Certified Peer Specialists across the country to help us develop this intervention by completing this 10 minute survey. While you will not personally benefit from being in this research study, we hope to gain information that may help people in the future.

[https://dartmouth.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_38GJ65JLDVpIY9T](https://dartmouth.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_38GJ65JLDVpIY9T)

## Berkeley University of California: Call for Research Participants

Do you currently work as a peer support provider?

If so, your perspective on work-related stress is needed.

[Peer Specialists Research Participants](#)

**Ready to get started?**

For more info, check out:

[www.peer-stress-survey.com](http://www.peer-stress-survey.com)

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Do You Know about **Able**? You might want to!

[www.ablenrc.org](http://www.ablenrc.org)

*The Stephen Beck, Jr. Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2014 allows those with disabilities to save for qualified disability expenses without the risk of losing their benefits from assistance programs like SSI and Medicaid.*

For more information,  
please see [www.ablenrc.org](http://www.ablenrc.org) for details!

## Peer Newsletters and Updates

### The Peer Respite Directory

Help Live & Learn, Inc. update its peer respite directory. Live & Learn is a consumer-run and woman-owned social enterprise that provides research, technical assistance, and knowledge translation services to behavioral health system stakeholders. Please check us out, and while you're at it, sign up for news and more [here!](#)

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Stay current and up to date by signing up for:

[The Key Update](#)

The Key Update focuses on late-breaking news and notes on important mental health and human rights issues.

Click here to view the latest issue of

[The Key Update - January 2018](#)



*National Mental Health  
Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse*



**Peer Leadership  
Center**

The Peer Leadership Center is a clearinghouse and point of connection for Peer Specialists. Click here for the latest news and upcoming events in the [Peer Leadership Center](#).

***Are we missing something you'd like to see here? Please email us at [info@inaops.org](mailto:info@inaops.org)***

## **Join iNAPS**

To join online and pay by credit card, or to download an application and pay by check, go to:

<http://www.inaops.org/join-us/>

### **What's In It for Members?**

There's a lot in store for members this year. We're in the process of updating communication, website, and social media platforms. Members will enjoy connecting and contributing to iNAPS through multiple channels via the website, including professional member profiles, and targeted discussion boards. We are also strengthening our use of social media like Facebook and Twitter to grow a community of peer support with members.

Members Also Receive significant discounts for the annual conference.

Members also receive continuing education certificates when they participate in the monthly webinars sponsored by Optum. These webinars are open to anyone, but only members earn certificates.



## About iNAPS

The **International Association of Peer Supporters (iNAPS)** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that promotes emerging and best practices in peer support and peer workforce development.

We send regular newsletters and updates to our members and free email subscriber list of 5000, hold webinars on topics requested by peer supporters, and host an internationally-attended conference that brings together people from all aspects of the peer workforce.

This year marks the 12<sup>th</sup> annual conference devoted to the peer support workforce and champions of the peer support movement. This year's conference details will be announced soon.

### Our Mission

Our mission is to grow the profession by promoting the inclusion of peer supporters throughout healthcare systems worldwide. We learn together and grow in our ability to:

- Demonstrate compassion and hope
- Understand
- Expect more and encourage the next step
- Increase acceptance of those with mental health, substance use, or trauma experiences in their communities of choice
- Increase awareness of the benefits of hiring peer support providers

### Our Vision

Our vision is to make peer support services an option for anyone who needs the compassion and understanding of someone who has been there.

### Our Values

Our values come from 98% nationwide approval of twelve core ethical values of peer support that were compiled and distributed by iNAPS founder Steve Harrington in 2013.

To download a free copy of the National Practice Guidelines from the iNAPS website:

<https://na4ps.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/nationalguidelines1.pdf>