



Learning Community to Expand Use of Certified Peer
Specialists Teaching Whole Health in Texas

Alternatives 2010

October 2, 2010



Presentation Objectives

- Describe the major responsibilities of Via Hope.
- Describe the Peer Specialist Learning Community Strategy
 - Expand Use of Peer Specialists.
 - Lessons Learned and Next Steps.
- Describe Whole Health and why included in basic Peer Specialist Training.
- Describe Hogg Foundation interest in Peer Workforce Development.

Background on Via Hope





Background on Via Hope

- Statewide Training and Technical Assistance Center for people in recovery, family members, youth, and professionals.
- Texas one of nine states with Mental Health Transformation (MHT) Grant from SAMHSA.
- Concept came from consumer voice members of MHT's Transformation Working Group (TWG).



Background on Via Hope

- In operation since February, 2009.
- Grant from Department of State Health Services to Mental Health America of Texas and NAMI Texas.
 - Initial funding from MHT grant
 - Switching to mental health block grant funding for 2011.
- Staffing
 - Some are MHAT employees.
 - Some are NAMI TX employees.
 - Goal to house staff together eventually.



Background on Via Hope

- Major Initiatives
 - Sponsor training for consumers, family, and professionals..
 - Help develop statewide consumer network.
 - Youth consumer activities.
 - Online resource function and technical assistance.
 - Develop family partner training.
 - **Develop and operate statewide peer specialist training and certification program.**
 - First on-going peer specialist training program in Texas.

Peer Specialist Training and Certification Program





Peer Specialist Training and Certification Program

- **Peer Support** - The act of people who have had similar experiences with mental illnesses giving each other encouragement, hope, assistance, guidance, and understanding that aids in recovery. It can be done anytime or anywhere when two or more peers are in a mutual supportive relationship.
- **Peer Support Services** - Programs, discussions, events, groups, etc. within the mental health system that are led by people in recovery and based on the philosophy of peer support. They take place within the structure of an agency or organization and are provided as services by a trained peer specialist.



Peer Specialist Training and Certification Program

- Certified Peer Specialist.
 - Consumer in recovery from his/her mental illness.
 - Uses recovery experience to provide hope to others; tell his or her recovery story.
- Certification Training.
 - Five day, 40 hour training.
 - List of 23 competencies in three categories.
 - Pass exam demonstrating competencies.
- Most work for mental health providers.



Peer Specialist Training and Certification Program

- Administrative issues.
 - Application process.
 - Eligibility requirements.
 - Grandfathering and reciprocity policies.
 - Exam process.
 - C. E. U. requirements for recertification.
 - Guiding principles and code of ethics.



Peer Specialist Training and Certification Program

- Training Program
 - Identified preferred training curriculum (ACG/Georgia).
 - Identified contractor to help implement.
 - DBSA/Appalachian Consulting/Recovery Opportunities.
 - Adapted for Texas requirements.
 - Incorporated “Whole Health” Module.
 - Promote connection between physical and mental health.
 - Reduce disparity in life expectancy.



Peer Specialist Training and Certification Program

- Infrastructure Development.
 - Ensure employment opportunities for peer specialists.
 - Help providers understand benefits of hiring peer providers.
 - Identify changes in workplace culture and policies needed to successfully incorporate peer specialists.
 - Peer Supports = Workforce Development.
 - Strategy: Peer Specialist Learning Community

Peer Specialist Learning Community





Peer Specialist Learning Community

- Purpose of Learning Community
 - Help participants understand that **successfully** implementing peer specialists involves more than simply creating new positions on organizational chart.
 - Help participants understand issues and plan ahead.
 - Provide technical assistance.
 - Encourage teams to share and learn from each other.



Peer Specialist Learning Community

- Invited volunteer teams from local Community Mental Health Centers to participate.
 - Eleven Centers and one consumer operated center.
- Structured ten month process.
 - Application process November, 2009.
 - Kick off conference last January.
 - Ending conference last month (September).



Peer Specialist Learning Community

- Application Process.
 - Executive Sponsor.
 - Team of 3-4 people; consumer and professional.
 - Agency Readiness for Change Assessment.
- Kick Off Conference.
 - LC track as part of state USPRA conference.
 - Joint plenary sessions and separate workshops.
 - Three days
 - Seven “Faculty” + Texas Experts



Peer Specialist Learning Community

- Faculty:
 - Lori Ashcroft, Ph.D
 - Dan Fisher. M.D., Ph.D.
 - Larry Fricks, M.A.
 - Steve Harrington, J.D.
 - Lyn Legere, CPRP
 - Pat Nemec, PsyD, CRC, CPRP, LCP
 - Peggy Swarbrick, Ph.D



Peer Specialist Learning Community

- Staff Survey
 - All staff – Recovery Self Assessment
 - Staff opinion of agency's attitude towards recovery.
 - At beginning of project and again at end.
- Written Implementation Plan (more later).
- Peer Specialist Certification Training.
 - Conducted twice during LC period.
 - About half of participants from LC.



Peer Specialist Learning Community

- One Day onsite staff training on recovery principles.
 - Recovery Opportunities Center.
 - Lori Ashcraft and Chris Martin.
- Monthly Conference Calls/Individual Calls.
- Advanced Peer Specialist Training.
 - Recovery Opportunities Center, Chris Martin.
 - Not just for Learning Community Peer Specialists.
- One day closing conference (over two days).



Peer Specialist Learning Community

- Sections of Implementation Plan
 - Intended Roles for Peer Specialists
 - Written job descriptions.
 - Number of Peer Specialist positions
 - Initially and long term.
 - Funding Sources
 - General Revenue or Medicaid
 - Organizational placement and supervision



Peer Specialist Learning Community

- Sections of Implementation Plan (continued)
 - Human Resources Policies
 - Make sure no unintended barriers to employment.
 - Universally friendly policies.
 - Internal Marketing Plan
 - What are the attitudes of professionals staff?
 - How do you affect culture change?
 - Orientation and training.



Peer Specialist Learning Community

- Sections of Implementation Plan (continued)
 - Prepare for difficult situations
 - Recruitment Plan
 - Where do you find candidates?
 - Contingency Plan/ Back-Up
 - Turnover inevitable
 - Ongoing Support Plan
 - What else is needed to make positions successful?



Peer Specialist Learning Community

- Overall results
 - Teams excited; made positive difference in agencies.
 - Small increase in number of peers doing peer support.
 - Large increase in number of Certified Peer Specialists!
- Lessons learned.
 - Needed more resources for conference follow up.
 - Needed greater focus on culture change.
 - Recovery still foreign concept to many providers.



Peer Specialist Learning Community

- Next year's LC
 - Recovery Oriented Learning Community.
 - Help organizations develop a recovery orientation.
 - Understand critical role of peer supports in developing a recovery orientation.
- Broaden to include state hospitals in addition to community mental health centers.
- Greater emphasis on executive sponsorship.
 - Leadership seminar on first day of conference.



An Organization's Recovery Orientation is a
Factor in the Success of a Peer Workforce

- and -

A Peer Workforce is a Factor in the Success of
an Organization's Recovery Orientation

Whole Health Curriculum





Whole Health Curriculum

- Teach Certified Peer Specialists how to help MH Consumers understand the relationship between physical and mental health and make positive changes in both.
- Based on recognition of relationship between mental and physical health and findings of the 2007 NASMHPD report on life expectancy.



Whole Health Curriculum

- NASMHPD Report
 - Adults with serious mental illness treated in public systems die about 25 years earlier than Americans overall.
 - In Texas, difference is 29 years.
 - Increase from 10-15 year disparity in early 1990's.



Whole Health Curriculum

- NASMHPD Report
 - Major cause is preventable medical conditions, e.g.:
 - Metabolic disorders.
 - Cardiovascular disease.
 - Diabetes.
 - Lifestyle choices are major factor in prevention.
 - Smoking.
 - Diet.
 - Exercise (or lack of).



Whole Health Curriculum

- Provides CPS with skills to help another peer set, get, and keep a whole health goal.
- Person Centered Planning Process.
 - Look comprehensively at person's life style.
 - Strength based, focuses on person's strengths, interests, and natural supports.
 - Stress creating new health life style habits and disciplines.



Whole Health Curriculum

- Origins of curriculum.
 - Based on Chronic Disease Self-Management Program developed by Kate Lorig, R.N., DrPH, Stanford Univ.
 - Developed by Appalachian Consulting Group.
 - Texas one of first states to incorporate in base CPS curriculum.



Whole Health Curriculum

First of Three Core Beliefs:

- People cannot be forced or coerced to change their unhealthy life-style habits; therefore participation in the PSWH training needs to be on a voluntary basis and participants acknowledge that they have health issues that they are thinking about dealing with.



Whole Health Curriculum

Second Core Belief:

- People are more likely to create a healthier lifestyle when you focus on their interests, strengths, supports, and what they see as possible; therefore, the training helps people focus on what they want to create in their lives, not on what they need to change.



Whole Health Curriculum

Third Core Belief:

- People find it easier to create new habits than to change or stop old habits; therefore, Whole Health training focuses on creating new habits or disciplines on a weekly basis, monitoring how well they are doing and accepting support from their peers.



Whole Health Curriculum

- Focus on six healthy life-style domains.
 - Healthy eating.
 - Physical activity.
 - Restful sleep.
 - Stress management/Relaxation Response.
 - Service to Others.
 - Support Network.



Whole Health Curriculum

- Five Keys to Success.
 - A Person-Centered goal that uses the SMART process to be written into a treatment plan.
 - A Weekly Action Plan that uses a confidence scale.
 - A Daily/Weekly Personal Log.
 - Peer Accountability and Support.
 - Weekly Peer Support Whole Health Group.



Whole Health Curriculum

- SMART Goals
 - S - Specific
 - M - Measurable
 - A - Achievable
 - R - Related
 - T - Time Limited



Whole Health Curriculum

- Potential Benefits.
 - Improvements in morbidity and mortality.
 - Improvement in physical well being.
 - Improvement in mental well being.
- Potential Risks.
 - Training CPS's in skills the may not have an opportunity to use.

Hogg Foundation for Mental Health





Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

- History.

- James S. Hogg – TX governor, late 1800's.
 - Later in life, made fortune in oil.
- Children – Ima, Will, Mike, Tom.
- Ima and Mike created Foundation in September, 1940
 - In honor of late brother Will Hogg
 - Felt their fortune was a trust for people of Texas.
- Hogg Foundation for Mental Hygiene.
 - Original focus on public education.



Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

- History.
 - In 1950's
 - Started giving grants for research, training, fellowships to practitioners, students, non-profits.
 - Changed name from Mental Hygiene to Mental Health.
 - In 1960's
 - Grants for projects demonstrating innovative ideas in mental health services.
 - In 1990's.
 - Created National Advisory Council to help with strategic planning.



Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

- Recent and Current Activities.
 - In 2000's
 - Identified areas where grants can have significant impact.
 - 2005 Strategic Plan – 3 priority areas
 - Integrated health care.
 - Cultural competency.
 - Workforce development.
 - 2009 – Hired two consumer and family liaisons to lead consumer, youth and family initiative.

Peer Workforce Development





Peer Workforce Development

- Initiatives
 - Bi-lingual scholarships.
 - Scholarships for graduate students in Social Work
 - Network of African American behavioral health professionals.
 - Via Hope
 - Not part of regular competitive application process.



Peer Workforce Development

- Consumer, youth, and family perspective
 - Foundation priority to encourage consumers, youth, and family in their unique personal journey to recovery.
 - Only people who have been through process of recovery and wellness themselves or through a family member can know what it is like.



Peer Workforce Development

- Consumer, youth, and family perspective.
 - Trying to increase opportunities to participate in state and local policy making, grassroots advocacy, design and delivery of mental health services, and peer services and supports.
 - Grant award criteria includes requirement for consumer, youth, and family involvement. Proposals must include plans for involving them from beginning to end of project.



Peer Workforce Development

- Via Hope Grant
 - Two years – September, 2010 through August 2012.
 - Coordinated with funding from Dept. of State Health Services (DSHS).
 - DSHS grant is to Mental Health America of Texas (MHAT), with subcontract to NAMI Texas.
 - Hogg grant is to NAMI Texas, with subcontract to MHAT.
 - Intent is for grant activities to compliment each other.



Peer Workforce Development

- Via Hope Grant
 - Funding in both years of grant for:
 - Basic Certified Peer Specialist Training.
 - “Train the trainers” training.
 - Community education for peer workforce development.
 - Learning community site visits.
 - Cultural competency training.
 - Translation services.
 - Staff Travel.
 - Continuing Education.



Peer Workforce Development

- Via Hope Grant
 - Funding in both years of grant for:
 - New Family Coordinator position.
 - “Family Partner” curriculum development or acquisition.
 - Workforce development training coordinator.
 - Funding in second year of grant for:
 - Youth peer to peer training.
 - And finally.....
 - Foundation donating office space for Via Hope staff to be co-located!



Peer Workforce Development

- Why is the Hogg grant to Via Hope of interest to you?
 - Hogg Foundation funds only available in Texas, but....
 - Many foundations interested in health or mental health.
 - Investigate to find out what is available in your area.
 - Nonprofits and governments both need to be creative.
 - Collaboration of DSHS, Hogg, MHAT, and NAMI leverages funds to accomplish more than either funder could do individually.



Contact Information

Dennis Bach, Via Hope Director

dennis@mhatexas.org

512-454-376 x204

Eileen Rosen, Via Hope Consumer Coordinator

erosen@namitexas.org

512-693-2000

Tammy Heinz, Hogg Foundation Program Officer/Consumer
and Family Liaison

Tammy.heinz@austin.utexas.edu

512-471-7635

Thank You!!!

