

# An Alternative Crisis Response Using Intentional Peer Support



Chris Hansen- Shery Mead Consulting 2010

## **Whakatauki**

**Ko tatou kotahitanga kia kohangia nga hina kia mahi  
Me hangiaotanga ki te hurihuri o te hou ora mo tatou  
te iwi**

**We unite to strengthen networks  
Creating change and wellness  
For the betterment of our people**

# What we're going to talk about

- Why talk about coercion?
- Cultural Context- what happens in the traditional system
  - Redefining Safety and Risk
- How we get stuck there
- Overview of IPS: What makes it different
  - 3 Principles
  - 4 Tasks
- Define Crisis as Opportunity

# Crisis as Opportunity

## Hope Response

- Sitting with discomfort
- Staying in connection
- Unpredictability = Possibility

## Fear Response

- Trying to calm things down: stabilization
- Taking care of, helper/helpee
- Predictability: things go back to the way they were

# Non-Coercive Options

WHY?

# How the Traditional System affects our Communities

- Doesn't acknowledge the significance of trauma
- Re-traumatizes
- Fear-based
- Liability-based
- Contributes to stigmatizing attitudes and discriminatory behavior

# How a fear-based system affects the way we know and act

- Rewards helplessness and compliance, which are counter to recovery/moving on
- Robs us of our individuality/creativity/identity
- Stifles our ability to take risks
- Labels our experiences and feelings as 'illness'
- Teaches us to be afraid of our strong feelings

# Safety

What can you do when you feel safe?

# Risk

What happens to our lives if we are  
afraid of taking risks?

All human growth and learning  
involves taking risks

What has crisis meant to you in  
the past?

What do you want from others when  
you are at your worst/are in crisis?

# The 3 Principles of IPS

1. Learning vs Helping
2. Focus on the Relationship vs Focus on the Individual
3. Focusing on hope to move through our fear and discomfort

# Learning vs Helping

## Learning

- Doesn't assume a problem
- Doesn't assume there is a mental health context
- We give aid to other people/countries in the name of "help," but what do we learn about them?

## Helping

- Assumes a problem
- Assumes illness
- Help tells the other person that you have some type of expertise creating a potential power imbalance

# Learning Relationship

- Describe a positive memorable learning experience where someone inspired you to move through your comfort zone
- What were the qualities in the relationship? (e.g. people didn't tell me what to do, people trusted that I have good ideas etc)



# Focus on the Relationship vs Focus on the Individual

## Individual

- Only one person has to change
- We Predetermine outcomes
- We lose sight of our own learning
- One person is seen as having problems and needing to change
- We lose sight of the relational dynamics

## Relationship

- Both parties contribute to the learning
- We can co-create possibilities that didn't exist before
- Both parties are reminded of their status as valuable and respect-worthy citizens
- Our relationship becomes a model for other relationships

# Focusing on hope to move through our fear and discomfort

## **Fear-based**

- Need to contain or control-creates disconnect
- Want things to remain comfortable
- Take/abuse power
- Focus on calming down/stabilization
- 'Taking care of'
- Seeking predictability, return to status quo
- React rather than respond

## **Hope-based**

- Sitting with fear and discomfort
- Responding from hope-base
- Stays in connection
- Sees unpredictability as possibility
- Opportunity to learn and grow
- Opportunity to do something different
- Both people stay in conversation

# The Tasks of Intentional Peer Support



1. Connection
2. Worldview
3. Mutuality/mutual responsibility
4. Moving towards vs. moving away from



Connection

Disconnection

Re-connection

# Connection



Things that help build connection:

- Approaching with interest/ Self awareness/authenticity
- Openness (not passing judgment)
- Validation
- Asking open ended questions
- Sharing our stories
- Empathy not sympathy

# Worldview

## What do we mean?

- *Becoming aware of what we bring to the interaction*
- *Being curious about what the other person brings.*
- *Learning/creating new worldviews together*
- *Can you think of an example of a time you've had assumptions about something and they turned out to be all wrong? What built those assumptions?*

# Doing Mutual Responsibility



The relationship



Shared  
Responsibility

You

Me

# Mutuality

Negotiating what will work for both  
of us and maintaining an awareness  
of power.

# Moving Towards



- Moving towards means getting a clear picture of what you want to achieve
- Moving away is focusing on what's not working while moving away from it

# In the Moment

- Breathe. Prepare and ground yourself.
- Connect. Look for moments of connection, and use validation.
- Worldview. What are you thinking, and why? How does the other person understand what's going on?
- Mutuality. Negotiate what works for both of you. Be honest and forthcoming.
- Moving forward, towards something. Plan to check back to see if anything has changed afterward, even if it's just the relational dynamic.

# Final exercise...

- Think back to the types of experiences that scared you.
- Identify one thing you'd like to try based on what you learned today.
- Share with your small group and get suggestions.
- How will you measure success? (Hint: You can only measure what you do differently.)