Developing & Integrating Mutual Support Programs in Behavioral Health

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Mutual Supports: An Invocation

Who then can so softly bind up the wound of another as he who has felt the same wound himself?

~ Thomas Jefferson
Why “Mutual” Supports

“Mutual Supports” refers to a process of helping based, in part, on a shared lived experience or identity and the knowledge gained from overcoming those challenges.
Why “Mutual” Supports

Research on organized mutual support programs have been shown to improve outcomes across a number of health conditions including treatment retention & adherence, reduction in utilization of acute services, an increase in positive health related behaviors, and self reported hope and optimism of managing health conditions.

Why “Mutual” Supports

• Provides an evidence based, cost effective adjunct to traditional treatment modalities
• Instills authentic hope for recovery
• Provides continuity of relationships for persons in shifting program modalities
• Helps with navigation and advocacy in complex and unfamiliar systems
• Based on voluntary, non-coercive principles reinforcing strengths, abilities, and “personhood”
Organizational Benefits

• Improved client outcomes (retention, adherence, acuity, utilization, community tenure, & employment)

• Provides “expert” knowledge regarding organizational improvement and practice awareness

• Influences organizational culture re: Recovery

• Potential for Medicaid reimbursement

• Focus of SAMHSA response to Healthcare Reform agenda
Assessing Readiness

• Adherence to recovery principles & language
• Openness to self disclosure
• Competency in clinical supervision, especially in areas of provider self disclosure
• Culture welcoming to involvement of persons served in agency activities
• Sophistication & policies guide dealing with boundary issues
• Resource availability
• Workforce development options
Before the Hiring Process

- Expectations of self disclosure and limits thereof
- Openness to current or previous service recipients & policies to govern behavior, protections of privacy
- Attitude and policies regarding the management of relationships with service recipients prior to being employed in the agency
- Accommodating Tx needs (when, where)
- Compensation & benefit dilemmas
- Hiring and selection teams
Advocacy Unlimited: Recovery University

- Prepares persons in recovery to perform case management role on CSP/RP teams
- 60 hour classroom training program + homework
- Certification exam to assure content mastery
- Ability to “test out” for experienced staff
- Sets the stage for future Medicaid billing if this becomes an option
- 3 year certification schedule
Recovery University Training

• Effective, Empathetic Communication Skills
• Legal and Ethical Practice, Boundaries, Client Rights
• Introduction to Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Co-Occurring Disorders
• Principles of Psychiatric Rehabilitation
• Medicaid Mental Health Waiver / Money Follows the Person
• Using Your Recovery Story, Role of Peer Supports on Teams, Recovery Culture
• Role Challenges, Conflict Resolution, Self Care
• Recovery Planning and Documentation
• Entitlements and Benefits Management
• Cultural Awareness
Recovery University

- 80 candidates have successfully achieved certification to date
- An additional co-hort of twenty individuals are currently being trained
- A two day “refresher course” and seating for certification exam will take place in the fall, TBD
- Advocacy Unlimited can assist in advertising positions and facilitating matching with graduates in your geographic area
Questions ?

![Image of a boy raising his hand](image)

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