

IL-NET

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Empowering Persons with Psychiatric Disabilities: The Role of the Peer Model of CILs

Peer Certification and Core Competencies

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Certified Peer Specialists

A Certified Peer Specialist is a person who has not only lived the experience of mental illness but also has had formal training in the peer specialist model of mental health supports. They use their unique set of recovery experiences in combination with solid skills training to support peers who have mental illness. Peer Specialists actively incorporate peer support into their work while working within an agency's team support structure as a defined part of the recovery team.

Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist

www.wicps.org

Wisconsin CILs Examples

- Wisconsin CILs do peer support in a number of ways.
- Most recognize a best practice of having a trained volunteer peer support program of peers who are not certified.
- The Centers who employ Certified Peer Specialists (CPSs) generally do it as a fee-for-service (FFS) activity
 - Many of the CPSs do not work at Centers but at remote sites providing Mental Health Services
- CPS training is offered to all IL staff at one CIL, but generally a person does not have to be certified to work at an IL Center.

Wisconsin Centers

- One Wisconsin center is a provider of psychosocial rehabilitation services as a FFS activity.
 - That center also runs a drop-in center.
 - They employ CPSs both internally at the Center and drop-in/recovery center and externally
- Another Center also runs a drop-in center and employs CPSs there.
- A third Center employs CPSs who work with HMO patients with mental disability.
- Other Centers also employ CPSs.

Wellness Workforce Coalition (WWC)

- Flooding of the VT State Hospital
- Money into peer services
- VT Dept. of Mental Health funds VCIL to create the “VT Peer Network” which becomes the WWC.
- Wellness Workforce Coalition is founded

Mission is—

to create a statewide coalition of peer-run organizations that supports training and advocacy for Vermont’s peer workforce while preserving the autonomy, character, and contributions of each member organization.

Coalition Includes

- Alyssum, Inc.
- Friends of Recovery, VT
- NAMI VT
- Vet to Vet
- Vermont Psychiatric Survivors
- Vermont Foundation of Recovery
- Turning Point of Center of Rutland
- Northeast Kingdom Youth Services–Peer Wellness Program
- VT Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health
- Vermont Center for Independent Living
- Another Way
- Green Mtn. Self-Advocates
- The Wellness Co-op
- VT Support Line

Work of the Coalition

- Coalition meetings begin—vision & mission
- Bring on a broader community of peer workforce
- Name change/develop website
- Trainings: IPS, WRAP
- Advocacy/Legislation
- Conversation shifts to peer certification

Vermont begins the journey...

Pros/Strengths/Opportunities

- Do it before it gets done to us
- Additional funding streams
- Accountability
- Ethical code
- Easier to find/hire qualified people
- Sustainable movement

Vermont's journey continued...

Cons/Weaknesses/Threats

- Stigmatizing
- Prescriptive
- Not having teeth
- Creating an atmosphere where some "cannot do it"
- Too radical or not radical enough

Core Competencies across Organizations

- Intentional Peer Support
- Wellness Recovery Action Plan
- Crisis training
- Cultural competency
- Advocacy training
- Non-violent communication
- Self-care
- History of survivor movement/medical model
- History of all the movements
- Hearing voices

Competencies, cont'd.

- Alternatives to Suicide training
- Bridges out of Poverty and alternative
- Anti-oppression
- Documentation
- Burn out
- Supervision with peers
- Supervision with clinical
- Vicarious trauma
- Business & Administration skills
- Soft skills
- Team building skills

Values & Ethics

- Integrity
- Safety
- Mutual respect
- Empowerment
- Pro-individual choice
- Harm reduction
- Non-judgment
- Informed decision making
- Person-driven
- Non-prescriptive
- Self-directedness

Values & Ethics, cont'd.

- Social justice oriented
- Change
- Making things better
- Crisis as an opportunity
- Being well / self-awareness
- Confidentiality
- Supervision
- Communication
- Civil discourse / positive regard

Twelve Core Competencies Decided

Core Competencies:

Skills, abilities, knowledge & values

1. Lived Experience
2. Ethics
3. Confidentiality
4. Communication
5. Self-Awareness (our own intentions)
6. Empowerment (learning instead of helping/fixing)
7. Boundaries

Core Competencies, cont'd.

8. Mutuality—Empathy
9. Authenticity (using your own language)
10. Lens (world view, gender/culture awareness)
11. Safety (internal/external)
12. Wellness & Self Care / Natural Supports

To be continued...

- Vermont is still working on a model that works for all members
- Challenge to the historical thinking of not having a certification process and working with respect to honor the work in the past and look to what the peer workforce is asking for

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