



HTH Peer Training Program

Information and Application packet for:

Fall 2018 Term

(Training begins in July 2018)

Howie The Harp's Peer Training program offers a 20 week intensive classroom training and a 12 week internship experience that gives people in mental health recovery an opportunity to use and develop their lived experience into a professional supportive role in mental health services.

To apply, applicants must (at a minimum):

- Have a mental health diagnosis
- Have earned a high school diploma (or GED/TASC equivalent) or more
- Be a resident of New York City

We seek applicants with diverse experiences. People with mental health conditions who also have co-experiences such as a history of incarceration, homelessness, substance use, military service or identify as LGBT, for example, are strongly encouraged to apply.

Application deadline for Fall 2018

Fri May 11, 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Peer Training Program Overview and Outcomes	Pg. 3-5
Application Directions and Checklist	Pg. 6
Application and Supporting Documents.....	Pg. 7-13
Who was Howie The Harp/Frequently Asked Questions.....	Pg. 15-20

Howie The Harp (HTH) Peer Training Program

Overview and Outcome

Our award winning **HTH Peer Training Program** provides an intensive 20-week classroom-based training and 12 week internship experience to specifically train people in mental health recovery to work as Peer Providers in Human Services. With your full participation and commitment to our program, you will be able to:

- Establish and sustain your own self-directed recovery and care.
- Provide effective peer support services in Human Services.
- Choose, get and keep competitive employment.

Note: The HTH Peer Training Program is an application-based opportunity. You must submit an application to be considered for this rigorous and rewarding training experience. Also, application submission does not guarantee admissions. Please see the FAQ section of this packet for more information.

The HTH Peer Training Program consists of three parts:

- I. 20 week classroom training (approx. 400+ hours)
- II. 12 week internship (work max. 24 hours per week)
- III. Competitive employment obtainment support

I. 20 week Classroom Training

Curriculum Description

Our classroom curriculum is designed to develop you in three key areas of workplace effectiveness:

Personal Wellness - our training provides a solid foundation of self-directed recovery tools that every effective employee needs for work/life balance and satisfaction. Classes include: W.R.A.P., Self Regulation, Nutrition, Anger Management and Conflict Resolution.

Professional Development - course topics not only address the how/why of the peer profession (History of the Movement, The Evolution of the Peer Specialist) but the knowledge, tools and skills that inform a well-rounded practice of Peer provision. Classes include: Stages of Change, Coaching, Goal Setting, Motivational Interviewing/Active Listening, Intentional Peer Support, Alternatives to Advice Giving, Group Facilitation, Recovery and Spirituality as well as an extensive modules of Cultural Competence and Navigation of various Public Systems.

Work Readiness - these courses offer comprehensive training in obtaining and maintaining employment. Topics include: cover letter/resume writing, mock interviewing, Utilizing Supervision and Writing Progress for Human Services.

II. 12* week Internship

Upon completion of the classroom training, you get to select from, and interview with, a myriad of internship partner agencies from across the NYC area. Our list of internship partner agencies includes:

- In-patient and out-patient hospital settings
- Respite centers
- PROS programs
- Supportive housing
- Mental health wellness/recovery programs
- Alternative to incarceration programs
- Co-occurring service program

Experiences you may obtain include: group facilitation, wellness coaching, navigating health/benefits systems and advocacy. You'll work 24 hours per week and receive a \$45/week stipend. You'll also attend a weekly Internship Support Group at HTH to facilitate an optimal learning experience as well as further enhance peer community around your employment goals. Internship hours can be used towards the New York State Peer Certification.

*Note: a select few of internship partner agencies require up to 24 week commitment, but students are informed before interviewing for those positions.

III. Competitive Employment Obtainment Support

Upon completion of the internship, you'll then move on to the final phase of the program – employment! Each week you'll attend our Career Club and meet with your Career Coach to enhance your employment search. The group camaraderie provides you with the support to enhance your job search experience. Also, agencies seeking peer providers often contact us directly for employees – part time and full time positions – which we distribute in these weekly meetings.

Benefits of HTH Peer Training Program

Although it is not necessary to attend and complete HTH's Peer Training Program in order to become a working peer provider, our program offers unique opportunities and benefits that other employment outlets do not offer.

Classroom Instruction

You'll be taught by working professionals. You'll practice the material among your classmates to develop your competency and understanding. Studying alongside your peers, discussions with trainers and staff bring the information alive in real-world ways. And most important to our students – you will not be alone in the process.

Socialization Education (aka Social Curriculum)

Both students and staff work together to secure a safe and functional learning environment. You'll learn to work in a group setting and be part of team – as workplace skills require.

Supportive Peer Staff

Our staff provides support throughout your participation in the program. As a peer run program, we understand the strengths that peers bring to the recovery process. Our intention ensures that you discover for yourself your greatest asset – personal experience. You'll be assigned to a career coach during your first week of training and they will accompany you all the way through to employment obtainment and retention.

Annual Graduation Ceremony

Each October, we celebrate the accomplishments of HTH graduates by providing a graduation ceremony where you, your invited guests and our program supporters come together for a luncheon program. Graduates receive certificates of completion, HTH supporters receive recognition and awards and everyone experiences a great afternoon of community!

Peer Certification Preparation

The New York State Peer Specialist Certification process is a simple, but detailed process. Your training at HTH will support you in obtaining the state certification as well as increase your chances of obtaining employment. Employers have told they appreciate the comprehensiveness of our program and have noted how prepared our graduates are to contribute to their recovery services.

Note: the Peer Certification is a New York State initiative of the Office of Mental Health – Consumer Affairs, separate from our peer training program. For more information about the New York State Peer Certification process/application, please contact:

New York Peer Specialist Certification Board

11 North Pearl Street, Suite 801

Albany, NY 12207

(518) 426-0945

info@nypeerspecialist.org

<http://nypeerspecialist.org>

OR: Academy of Peer Services <http://www.academyofpeerservices.org/>

Considerations for Successful Completion of the HTH Peer Training Program

From our over 20 years of experience, we've noted a few key factors that successful HTH graduates often have in common:

- A strong desire to work (part time or full time)
- A strong desire to work with peers/people in mental health recovery
- Stable/established housing and finances
- Clinical supports and/or personal supports established

Disclaimer: The factors listed above are common to most of the trainees who successfully complete the three phases of the program. There are, however, graduates who are successful in the program in spite of (or because of) their efforts/need to improve other areas of their life while simultaneously learning how to be an extraordinary peer provider in Human Services.

HTH Peer Training Program Application Directions

(please see FAQ section question 3 for more information about how to complete this section)

If you are interested in applying to our HTH Peer Training Program, please complete all items on the checklist below and submit:

- 1. Complete the demographic and background information requested on pages 7 & 8 (Face Sheet, Co-Experience Survey and ACCES-VR). (Applicants do *not* need to be enrolled with ACCES VR to apply to HTH. However, if accepted to HTH, all trainees will be asked to apply to ACCES-VR.)
- 2. Essay - 500 word essay about your interest in attending the HTH Peer Training Program. In your essay please answer the following 3 questions: what is the role of a peer provider, as you understand it, why do you want to become a peer provider and what do you intend to do after completing the HTH Peer Training Program?
- 3. Submit a psych evaluation and/or psych social with mental health diagnosis clearly stated. It must be dated/completed within 6 months of your application's submission date. If needed, have pgs. 9-10 completed by a licensed clinician (someone who can diagnose a mental illness may complete this form. Make sure they include their license number/stamp on this form)
- 4. Copy of High School/GED/TASC or highest degree completed.
- 5. TWO letters of reference from people who know you, your potential in human services and/or your recovery journey. In the letters these individuals should tell us how long, in what capacity they have known you and why they would recommend you for the HTH Peer Training Program. References from professionals should be on letterhead.
- 6. Resume (if available) **OR** outline of work/volunteer history and hobbies/interests for the past 10 years.

Once you completed all 6 items, please submit at the same time to our office. You're welcome to bring them to our office or mail them to:

Howie The Harp Advocacy Center
2090 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, 12th Floor
New York, New York 10027
Phone: 212-865-0775
Attn: Admissions

Once you've submitted your application with all supporting documents, you'll be contacted about your eligibility after the Fri May 11, 2018 deadline. For more information about the admissions process, please refer the FAQ section of this application.

Application submissions deadline for Fall 2018 term is
Friday May 11, 2018

PART 1 of APPLICATION

FACE SHEET INFORMATION

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

LEGAL NAME (First, Last) _____

PREFERRED NAME (if different from above) _____

BIRTH DATE _____ SS# _____ GENDER IDENTITY _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____ APT # _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP : _____

BEST PHONE NUMBER TO REACH YOU DAYTIME: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

RACE / ETHNICITY _____

PRIMARY LANGUAGE _____ SECONDARY LANGUAGE _____

CITIZEN: YES NO RELIGION _____

VETERAN: YES NO Dates of service: _____

Branch of service: _____ Discharge type: _____

MARITAL STATUS (circle one):

Single Married Common Law Divorced Separated Widowed

EDUCATION (Circle highest degree completed):

GED/HS Trade /Associates* Bachelor* MA /PhD*

*What was your major? _____

ARE YOU A TENANT IN HOUSING OWNED OR OPERATED BY COMMUNITY ACCESS, INC
(HTH is a program of Community Access Inc) Yes No

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF ANOTHER COMMUNITY ACCESS, INC PROGRAM? Yes No

If so, which one? _____

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT HOWIE THE HARP ADVOCACY CENTER?

AGENCY OR PERSON WHO REFERRED YOU:

CO-EXPERIENCE SURVEY

Howie The Harp Advocacy Center welcomes a diverse student roster with co-experiences – people with a mental health diagnosis who also have a history of incarceration, homelessness and/or substance abuse for example. This diversity of experience reflects the needs and perspective of mental health service users – the very people HTH graduates will be supporting in their work. It’s important to us as a peer program that our classroom reflect the people we support.

Please complete the following questions as accurately and honestly as you can.

****INCARCERATION:** Have you experienced incarceration for more than 6 months? (consecutive and/or total time served)?

YES NO

****please refer to our FAQ section for details about criminal charges that may affect obtaining employment in Human Services**

SUBSTANCE USE: Do you have alcohol/substance use recovery experience?

YES NO

HOMELESSNESS: Do you have homelessness experience?

YES NO

If you answered “YES” to any of the above questions, please describe the supports instrumental in your recovery: _____

Other than mental health experiences, please describe any other unique personal experiences in your background that may reflect the needs or experiences of peers currently seeking services (This may include military service, membership in a marginalized group, or life events that affected your personal wellness or recovery)

ACCES-VR INFORMATION (formerly VESID)

ARE YOU CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN ACCES-VR?

Yes No

IF NO: Were you ever enrolled in ACCES-VR/VESID?

Yes No Year: _____

IF YES:

ACCES-VR Counselor: _____ Phone: _____

Borough Office: _____ Date of last Contact _____

Has ACCES-VR sponsored you for other trainings? Yes No

If YES, what trainings you have attended? _____

CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL REPORT-- PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITY

Psychiatrist Name and Address

Consumer Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

1. Salient Psychiatric History (Onset, course, hospitalizations, treatments, etc.):

2. Psychiatric Diagnosis (APA nomenclature - DSM IV):

Category: 1. _____ Axis _____

2. _____ Axis _____

3. _____ Axis _____

Other (non-psychiatric): _____

3. Additional Studies (Psychological tests, CNS studies, perception, laboratory, etc.):

	<u>Performed</u>	<u>Recommended</u>
Results:		Reasons:

4. Current Findings (mental status, cognitive ability, affective derivatives, behavior, symptoms, organicity, stability of condition, etc.):

5. Current Medication and Therapy (Type and frequency, progress to date/projected need:

Mental health estimate [] Excellent [] Good [] Fair [] Poor

Name of primary therapist _____

Title _____ Phone _____

6. Discuss your opinion on the following factors to be considered in relation to training, education and employment:

A. Interpersonal Factors (sources of support or stress in the home, environment and/or work situation that should be enhanced or modified and avoided).

B. Personal Awareness and Motivation (degree of understanding of capacities and limitations; realistic decision making skills; ability and willingness to participate in a structured work-related program)

C. Functional Limitations (response to pressure, supervision, working conditions, etc.):

Work ability estimate Excellent Good Fair Poor

D. Other (pertinent factors which will assist in planning and working with the individual):

Date Last Examined

Examined By

Date of Report

Report Completed By

Report must be signed or co-signed by a qualified psychiatrist

Co-signer

Stamp or License Number:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) Who was Howie the Harp?

Howard Geld was a national pioneer in the peer movement. He got the nickname Howie the Harp because he played the harmonica as a street musician.

Having spent three years in psychiatric institutions in his youth, Howie said he found his cause: patient/mental health consumer/psychiatric survivor movement. (He preferred to use the term "crazy folks"!)

Howie helped start and ran several peer-led organizations in New York and California, including the Mental Health Liberation Project, Project Release, the California Network of Mental Health Clients and the Oakland Independence Support Center.

Yet, Howie recognized that transforming the mental health system required the full integration of people in recovery into the workforce, and that these workers needed the skills and knowledge to be effective change agents. As Director of Advocacy at Community Access, Howie conceived the model and developed the initial curriculum of the HTH Peer Training Program. Unfortunately, Howie died before the Center opened its doors – so it was renamed in his honor and legacy.

Howard "The Harp" Geld 1952-1995



Excerpt from NY Times- Feb 14, 1995

"I've been diagnosed as a schizophrenic, as psychotic, as manic-depressive and as psychotic depressive," Mr. Geld said later. "I don't really believe in those labels, but there have been times in my life when I went into what can be called a manic episode, and when I went into severe depressions. What I'm doing with my life right now is trying to learn how to control what I call manic energy. If it can be controlled and directed and channeled, it could be really valuable and real powerful. I'd rather learn how to control it, rather than be cured of it."

2) What is a typical day like in the HTH Peer Training Program?

Each day for the 20 week classroom portion of the program, we encourage all students to arrive when our office doors open at 8:30am. You'll have time to settle into your classroom seat, eat breakfast, chat with your classmates and take care of any personal needs before the AM session starts:

Mon through Thu

AM session: 9am to 12pm (15 min break at 10:15am)

Lunch Break: 12pm-1pm

PM session: 1pm to 3pm (15 min break at 2pm)

Fridays

AM session only: 9am to 12pm, (15 min break at 10:15am)

Our various trainings offer lectures, discussions, role play, group work, homework as well as periodic testing to help you learn and integrate your skills in real world situations. We have staff trainers as well as 25+ consultant trainer that bring their professional experience to the topics they teach.

3) I want to become a peer provider and would like to attend the HTH Peer Training Program. How do I apply?

Please read and follow the application directions on page 6 of this packet. Once you have collected and completed all the required documents, please submit the entire packet to our offices by the deadline provided.

Notes about completing application

FACE SHEET/CO-EXPERIENCE – Please make sure to complete all the information requested in the documents truthfully and accurately. Misrepresenting, omitting and/or providing false information is not recommended.

500 WORD ESSAY – Please answer the questions fully and succinctly. Please limit the essay to approximately 500 words.

PSYCH EVAL – If you're in a program that can provide your psych eval or a psych social completed within 6 months of your application submission, feel free to include a copy. If you need to have a psych eval completed, please use the one in this application (pgs 9-10). Anyone who is qualified to diagnose a mental health condition can complete this for you (for example: psychiatrist, psychologist, clinical social worker). Please make sure they include their license number. We must have this information for our funders who require that we only admit people n mental health recovery.

COPY OF EDUCATIONAL DEGREE COMPLETED: Most, if not all jobs in social services, require people have at least a high school diploma (or GED/TASC) in order to work. Since our program is employment-focused, we want to make sure each student has at least this educational requirement. If you have more than an high school diploma – but cannot locate your college/graduate degree – just submit your high school diploma.

TWO LETTERS OF REFERENCE – We are looking for people to speak about you in a way that demonstrates your commitment to self-direction, self-awareness and personal responsibility for your own recovery as well as a commitment to contributing to others.

4) What happens after I turn in my application? What are my chances of getting into the program? How many seats are available each term? When will I know if I have been accepted into the HTH Peer Training program?

Once your application is submitted, a team of staff assesses each and every application. After the application submission deadline, we invite applicants to a group interview. Once group interviews are complete, we make final decisions for invitation to the program. Each January (Spring term) and July (Fall term) we accept 40 students into the training cycle. We also establish a wait list to draw from should someone decline an invitation. All applicants will know their status 6 weeks before the training term starts. The selection process can take a few weeks as we personally review every single application and interview each person who fully applies for our program.

5) How much does HTH cost?

HTH programs are free of charge for all participants. We receive funding from the Office of Mental Health (OMH), the Department of Mental Health and Hygiene (DOHMH), ACCES – VR as well as grants and generous donations from private funders.

We do request that if possible, students enroll in ACCES VR services to help fund their participation in our program.

6) Do you offer any financial help/carfare during the training?

We don't offer financial support but note:

- If you are receiving public assistance and have been assessed as able to work with limitations' and attend HTH, you can apply through your vocational counselor at your program for carfare to attend our training.
- During the internship portion of your training, we offer a weekly stipend and subway fare reimbursement.

7) I'm interested in attending the HTH Peer Training Program. I have a long standing weekly appointment that conflicts with classroom time. What should I do?

If you are accepted into the Peer Training program, please note we have guidelines re: absenteeism ensure each student's knowledge and competency from the myriad of trainings. We suggest that you use the lead time between acceptance and the first day of training to reschedule your appointments.

The training runs from 8:30am-3pm Monday-Thursday & 8:30am-12pm on Friday. We ask students to schedule any appointments outside of those times.

8) I'm concerned about my history of incarceration and/or convictions. How will that affect my chances of actually getting work?

If you are accepted into the Peer Training Program, HTH will set up an appointment for you to get fingerprinted through the Office of Mental Health (OMH) at no cost to you. Fingerprinting is done *after* acceptance into the program, and has no effect on your attendance status. It's done to ensure that we are aware of any barriers to your successful employment, which is the ultimate goal of this program. If there is a barrier, you and your Career Coach will work on increasing your chances to get employment.

Note: Convictions that prohibit/greatly limit employment in social services:

- *Sexual assault charges*
- *Arson*
- *Crimes against vulnerable populations (such as children, elderly)*

And violent crime convictions within the past 10 years may require documentation support demonstrating your recovery (ie. Certifications, completed trainings, personal recommendations etc)

9) How much will I get paid as a peer worker in human services?

Pay rates are various, depending on experience, skill level required in the position etc. Our data shows the average hourly rate is close to \$13/hr and annual salary of \$30K+.

10) This program requires a great commitment of time – can you guarantee me employment?

Since opening our doors in 1995, HTH has established and maintained strong relationships and a positive reputation among agencies that employ peers. Agencies often seek us out exclusively for employment candidates. Due to the breadth of topics in our training, our peers have the option of seeking positions as peer providers as well as other jobs in Human Services not necessarily designated to peers.

Our training offers the time and space for you to grow in all facets of personal and professional development related to gaining long term employment. We have studied and considered the current needs in the Human Services field as well as mental health services and trends to offer the latest most up-to-date information in the classroom. We've spoken to working HTH grads and their supervisors across the city to ensure we offer information and training that supports real life situations. This program works if you work it!

With all that said – we can't *guarantee* you work. First, it is up to you to commit to the program as well as your personal growth and competency to work in the field. And our staff will work with you to identify employers with gainful opportunities.

However, be assured that between your commitment and our over 20 years of experience, your time at HTH will be well spent! ***Often Peer Specialist positions are listed with "HTH Graduate Preferred" in the qualifications section.***

11) Your program sounds great – I'd like to help empower others in their recovery, but I need to start working now. What should I do?

HTH also offers Assisted Competitive Employment (A.C.E.) Program – a supportive employment service to help people in mental health recovery gain and sustain employment of their choosing. The program is an on-going, year-round enrollment basis. If interested, please call our main line 212-865-0775 and ask for an ACE representative or download a packet from our webpage: www.communityaccess.org/hth.

12) What do HTH graduates say about their experience? What did they learn or how did they benefit from attending your program?

Recovery is not linear. The fact that the stumbles are part of the journey is central to personal growth at HTH and something I reinforce daily as a peer provider. Drew W

Throughout the training I was going through long episodes of depression and I used some of the tools I learned from HTH to walk me through my depression and I was able to find a measure of peace of mind through it. Robert S

The greatest lesson I learned about myself is that I'm a natural leader, highly empathetic and have the strength and courage to utilize these virtues for the growth of the peer community and my personal development. Scott R

When I got up to present to the class, I felt this incredible calm wash over me and it stayed with me throughout my entire presentation. What I noticed was that I was at home in myself and in front of this group of people I had grown to feel great affection for. I really have no words for how important the experience at Howie and all the people I got to experience it with is to me, but I know I will always be very grateful. Melanie F

HTH has changed my life. I am not ashamed of who I am. I am a proud warrior and have fought the good fight to get well. Gail Z

Internship/Employment Sites of HTH Students/Grads

Community Access Inc. www.communityaccess.org

Community Access expands opportunities for people living with mental health concerns to recover from trauma and discrimination through affordable housing, training, advocacy and healing focused services. We are built upon the simple truth that people are experts in their own lives.

Baltic Street - www.balticstreet.org

Baltic Street, AEH, Inc. is a peer-run not-for-profit corporation dedicated to improving the quality of life for people living with mental illness. Located in New York City, their recovery-oriented services help recipients obtain jobs, housing, social supports, education, vocational training, entitlements, and other life-enhancing services.

The Jewish Board <https://jewishboard.org>

Our work is steeped in clinical expertise and evidence-based practices and uses early and appropriate therapies to prevent or reduce the severity of mental health conditions. Across the five boroughs, The Jewish Board's counseling centers help people meet their emotional and behavioral health needs.

Kings County Hospital Center - Behavioral Health Center

www.nyc.gov/html/hhc/kchc

The Behavioral Health Center provides a complete range of mental and addictive disease services. Their aim is to give you and your family the necessary resources to cope with life's trial. Treatment is provided at various levels, from acute inpatient care to subsequent outpatient follow-up and rehabilitation.

Manhattan Psychiatric Center:

<http://www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/facilities/mapc/facility.htm>

Manhattan Psychiatric Center offers a range of comprehensive, evidence based inpatient and outpatient treatments for adults with mental illness.

CASES: The Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services: www.cases.org

By addressing factors such as lack of education, unemployment, homelessness, substance abuse, and untreated mental health disorders, CASES' innovative programs help court-involved youth and adults re-integrate into society, thereby making our communities safer and saving taxpayer dollars.

The Fortune Society: www.fortunesociety.org

Founded in 1967, The Fortune Society's vision is to create a world where all who are incarcerated or formerly incarcerated can become positive, contributing members of society. We do this through a holistic, one-stop model of service provision. Our continuum of care, informed and implemented by professionals with cultural backgrounds and life experiences similar to those of our clients, helps ensure their success.

Rainbow Heights www.rainbowheights.org

Rainbow Heights is an advocacy program for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender consumers requiring mental health services. We provide socialization, support, peer advocacy, and a safe place to take the next step on your road to emotional recovery and wellness.