

UNDERSTANDING PEER SERVICES

*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."
- Helen Keller*


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What is a Peer?

- *A peer is a person with lived experience (either personal or familial) with a mental health issue, who uses that experience in supporting others who are struggling.*
- Peers...
- Promote recovery
- Enhance hope
- Offer support
- Provide role modeling
- Supplement existing treatment with education, empowerment
- Aid in system navigation
- Provide tools which support independent living in the community



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What are Peer Services?

- People with Mental Health and/or Substance Use Disorders have a unique capacity to help each other based on a shared affiliation and a deep understanding of this experience.
- Through mutual support peers offer support, strength, and hope to their peers, which allows for personal growth, wellness promotion, and recovery.
- Peer Services are Trauma Informed Care Program which focus on the person. They are person-centered and self-directed

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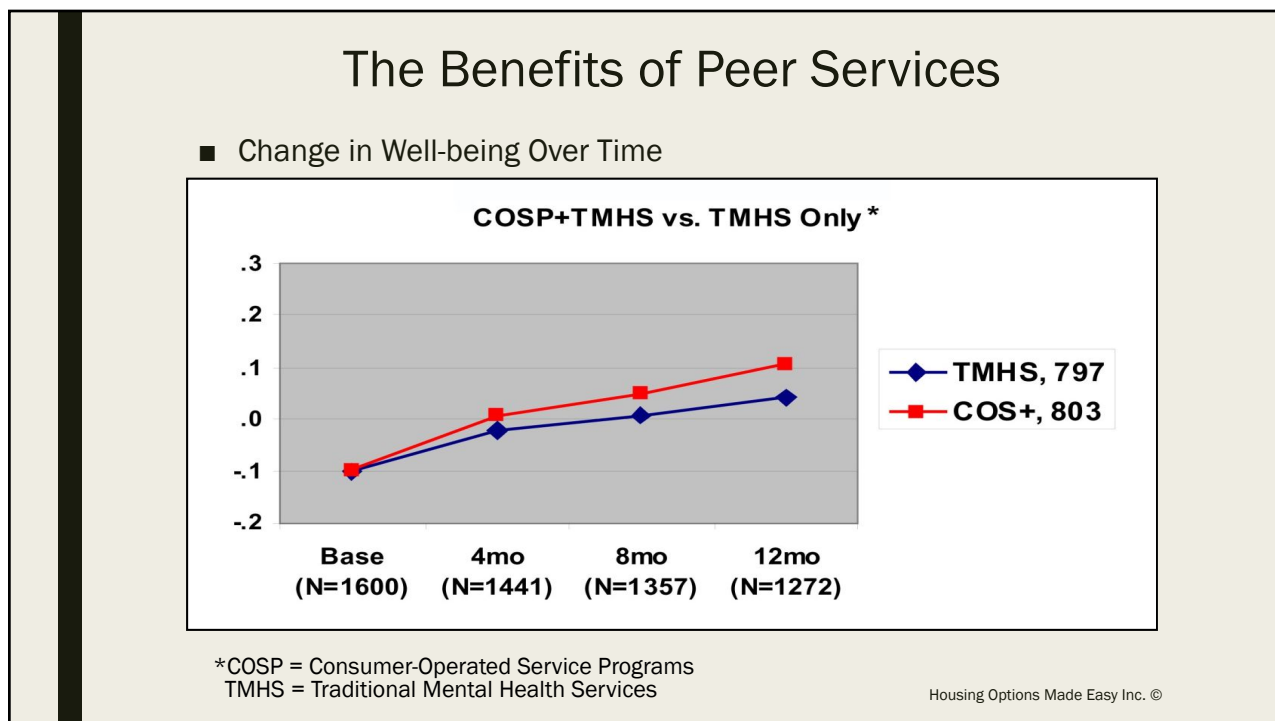
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The Benefits of Peer Services

- COSP** Study Results
- Analysis of more than 1,800 participants in the randomized, controlled trial revealed that those offered consumer-operated services as an adjunct to their traditional mental health services showed significant gains in **well-being—hope, self-efficacy, empowerment, goal attainment, and meaning of life**—in comparison to those who were offered traditional mental health services *only*
- <http://www.promoteacceptance.samhsa.gov>
- ****(Consumer Operated Service Program)**

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The Benefits of Peer Services

- The greatest gains in well-being were found for the participants who used the peer support services the most. So, Peer Support Services are Evidence Based Practices.
- Most important, analyses of COSP** common ingredients and outcome results established evidence of a strong relationship between key peer practices that support inclusion, peer beliefs, self-expression, and an increase in well-being outcomes.
- ** (Consumer Operated Service Program)

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Barriers to Being a Professional Certified Peer


- Even with certification, and high levels of training, there is a high level of stigma associate with being a certified peer. We are often questioned about our abilities and capabilities. Do we really have...
- Acceptable training
- General qualification
- Appropriate Writing skills
- Personal recovery support
- References
- Continuing Education
- Mostly, we get associated with our MH diagnosis, and that becomes our identity, and because of it, peers are not always taken seriously or it is assumed that we are not capable.

Practical Experience
Enough Education
Recovery philosophy
Re-traumatization
A strong Code of ethics
Recertification

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“Nothing in my past defines me... it is all just a piece of my puzzle.
BUT
Everything in my past has shaped me... it is up to me to determine if it is for the positive or the negative.”



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Sharing with a Purpose

- It is a common misconception that Peer sharing... peers using their lived experience to support others... is just people sitting and talking without a purpose.
- Being a peer means using your lived experience in support of another person, but it does not mean dominating a conversation. It means sharing with a purpose.
- Peers use their lived experience to support other peers, to establish a shared experience, to help role model a positive future and to help foster hope for other peers.
- Being a Peer means being transparent about your lived experience but it does not mean you have to be an open book... it means sharing to your personal comfort level and it means sharing because it supports a person.

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The Role of Peers in a Participants Life

- Peers build authentic and genuine relationships in order to facilitate a positive rapport, successful recovery collaboration and to foster hope.
- Peers provide...
- Tools to promote self-care
- Linkages to natural community supports
- Empowerment tools
- Person advocacy skills
- A collaborative team to assist in writing goals and actions plans
- A bridge to creating a person centered/ self directed recovery plan
- Provide tools to help with understanding and overcoming stigma
- We help reduce barriers and obstacles which may prevent a person from being successful
- We are dream encouragers not dream killers

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Peers as Professionals Working with Other Professionals

- Helps create a collaborative continuum of care for all participants
- Help bridge barriers between participants and other health professionals
- Helps reduce duplication of services because of the collaborative environment
- Creates a stronger circle of support to aid success
- Both Peer professionals and Health Care Professionals have a shared code of ethics and values which helps strengthen the participant's caring environment, which allows for a more effective level of care.

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Challenges of Professional Peers and Health Care Professional Working Together

- Question: So how can we as peers help reduce the potential concerns HCP may have with working with us.
- We have heard some of the following concerns...
- Dual relationships
- Lack of professional ethics and boundaries
- Peers being viewed as a "friend" rather than as a provider to participants
- Health Care Professional may still look at Professional Peer as a "client"
- Health Care Professional may not fully understand the peer model and its value.

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Boundaries and Peer Support

- Maintaining boundaries when providing peer support is vital the success of our participants
- When providing peer services, there are not fixed roles but we have open roles which facilitates conversation, but professional boundaries are needed and followed.
- Sometimes peers are the listener, sometimes the listened to, and sometimes that even changes in one conversation. Again... we are transparent with our lived experience to support another peer in their personal recovery. This Transparency allows trust to form.
- "Boundaries tell us why we're both here and what we're supposed to be doing together." -Mary Ellen Copeland
- **"We are paid to be friendly not friends"**

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Empowerment and Peer Services

- Focus on stability and helping Participants gain independence (do "with" instead of "for")
- Focus shifts from mental illness to advocacy and recovery
- While clinical support may still needed, peer support takes on increasing importance as a person moves into more person centered and self directed services.
- Professional Peers role model positive empowering behaviors in order to support a person to discover their own "spark of life"
- Empowerment supports the concept of wellness and recovery

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Empowerment, Self-care and WRAP

Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) is a highly individualized, strength based, self-determined process to guide recovery.

It can be used on its own or to supplement mental health services or for prevention and management

WRAP encourages people to focus away from illness and toward wellness become actively and responsibly engaged in the wellness process

Self determination, personal responsibility, empowerment, and self-advocacy are keys to mental health recovery and WRAP.

Decisions about care and life are made by the person whose life it is.

Every person is treated as an equal with dignity, compassion, mutual respect, and unconditional high regard at all times.

There is unconditional acceptance of each person as they are... unique, special individuals.

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WRAP is an Empowerment Tool for Self Care

All efforts are based on the premise that there are no limits to recovery.

It is understood that each person is the expert on her or himself.

The focus is on individual strengths and away from perceived deficits.

The focus is on people working together and learning from each other to increase mutual understanding, knowledge and promote wellness.

Programs and initiatives emphasize strategies that are simple and safe for anyone, and avoid those that may have harmful effects.

People are encouraged, supported and validated in sharing their thoughts, feelings, needs and experiences.

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Different Types of Peer Services, Strategies and Supports

- There are many types of Peer Roles and Services
- While they may have different titles and focus they all have the same emphasis.
- How many different peer services titles are you aware of?



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Peer Support Specialists Core Values

- Engagement in an individualized and positive relationship with the participant
- Assistance in creating linkages to a range of community-based services and natural supports
- Modeling community adjustment and wellness self-management skills
- Building empowering relationships
- Promoting personal responsibility
- Building individual resilience
- Establishing meaningful societal roles
- Developing natural supports
- Supporting freedom of choice
- Redefining crises as learning opportunities

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Housing

- ❑ Housing Options Made Easy, Inc. maintains nearly 400 beds of permanent supported housing in six counties in Western New York.
- ❑ These beds are funded through the New York State Office of Mental Health and HUD.
- ❑ The program provides first month's rent and security deposit, furniture, household goods upon admission.
- ❑ After admission, the program continues to provide an income-based monthly rental subsidy and monthly peer support.
- ❑ The peer support focuses on developing service plans, linking individuals to available community supports, and encouraging community integration to foster greater personal independence.
- ❑ In Erie County, these beds are accessible through an Erie County SPOA referral

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COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION TEAM

The Community Reintegration Team works together to support people as they make transitions in their recovery. These transitions include discharge from in-patient and moving to community based housing. The team works to create a person-centered support system that works with the services and supports that an individual is already receiving. Our team not only provides a one on one Peer Bridger support, but also Occupational Therapy and Nursing as needed.

The team will work to provide support, information, learning, linkages, and advocacy. Some examples of supports provided include: goal planning, Advanced Directives, learning to use the bus system, learning proper medication management, meal planning, and financial education.



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Hospital Diversion Programs

- Emergency rooms can cause re-traumatization for a person.
- Since Emergency rooms are always accessible, People often go there for an evaluation, thinking there is no other place to go. It becomes a learned behavior to automatically visit the emergency room when a crisis hits. This can and often results in hospitals being overburdened and overcrowded, this impacting quality of care for individuals the community.
- Hospital diversion Programs help provide an alternative to the emergency room services and are a place people can go to help avoid crisis.



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Peer Run Respites

- The program is designed to provide individuals with options for managing or working through difficult times while they continue to live in the community. It is our intention to provide individuals with an alternative to the frequent use of emergency services and inpatient admissions. Participants of our program will be provided with a safe and supportive atmosphere in which their emotional needs will be addressed with the support of a "peer companion."
- The Respite House Hospital Diversion program is a safe, supportive, empowering alternative to traditional services and inpatient admissions. The program is person-centered where the individual's choices are respected. Our program will help keep people safe in the community while providing the option of developing a plan to address their current situation and avoid hospitalization.



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Who can come... who cannot and why is it important

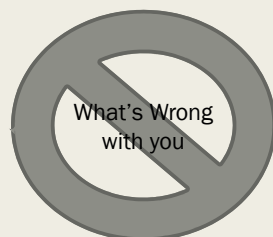
- A person who self-identifies as having a mental health issue, or who is struggling with mental health issues may be able to come to the respite.
- Additionally,
- A person must be 18 or over
- Cannot be a sex offender
- Cannot be a violent offender**
- Cannot be homeless
- Cannot be actively using drugs or alcohol
- So why are these guidelines important?



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Intake: Why do we ask what we ask?

- Intake is a short interview that
- Asks for basic identifying information in order to do a background check
- briefly discusses symptoms
- Asks about hobbies and interests



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Hopes for Stay/ ISP/ Goals

- Part of all Guest registrations is
- Hopes for Stay
 - The short term goal that guests and peers will work on while at the respite
 - One short term goal and then daily acknowledgement of what was done that day to support accomplishing that goal
- Individual Service Plan
 - the written details of the supports, activities, and resources that will be addressed for the guest to achieve personal goals. The Individual Service Plan is developed to articulate decisions and agreements made during a person-centered process of planning and information gathering.
- SMART Goals
 - Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time

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Menu of program options to promote wellness management.

This may include but is not limited to...

Menu

■ Art Therapy	Spirituality
■ Music Therapy	Peer Support
■ Journaling to Heal	Wrap/ Crisis Planning
■ Cooking Therapy	Whole Health Action Management (WHAM)
■ Coffee talk time	Peer Support Groups
■ Exercise programs	
■ Yoga	
■ Meditation	

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Peer Run Respites

- Respite House model/ Hospital Diversion program is to provide easy access to supports for individuals in the community before their problems reach crisis levels. Individuals who use this program will be provided with a sense of *Independence* and *Empowerment* as each person is encouraged to take an active role in his/her stay in the program. The program is designed to provide individuals with options for managing or working through difficult times while they continue to live in the community. It is our intention to provide individuals with an alternative to the frequent use of emergency services and inpatient admissions. Participants of our program will be provided with a safe and supportive atmosphere in which their emotional needs will be addressed with the support of a "peer companion."
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Peer Run Respite

- Peer-run respite centers are for individuals who are in crisis but not a danger to themselves or others. Respites help divert people from hospitalization and avoid reaching a dangerous state.
- **Contrary to previous beliefs, Crisis care may need less security, not more**
- Study authors concluded that locked doors lead to Patients feeling frustrated, stigmatized and depressed... which leads to...
 - Physical violence risk increased by 11%
 - Self-harm risk increased by 20%
 - Medication refusal increased by 22%

Crisis does not have to be a negative experience. It is an opportunity for growth, even in overwhelming situations.

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The Warmline

- Within the respite Program is a daily Warmline program which is a non-crisis call line
- Callers talk about a variety of topics and sometimes they just call to talk about their days.
- Peers offer support and encouragement when requested or desired.
- When a person utilizes the Warmline they decide what type of support they need!
- Examples of request:
 - *Let me tell you about my day...
 - *I wonder if you have the number to the food bank
 - *I feel frustrated and I need someone to talk to...
 - *My family doesn't understand....
 - *Can you help me find...?

The warmline is People Helping People!



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The Warmline

- The Warmline also supplies:
 - Community linkages to services and events
 - The opportunity for face to face peer support
 - Referrals to the respite
 - Texting options for an additional way to receive support



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STRAWW

- We are one of only two multi-county, peer-driven recovery centers in New York State.
- We serve the counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Chautauqua. 
- Funded by the NYS Office of Mental Health, Housing Options Made Easy, Inc. partners with Cattaraugus County Community Services, Mental Health Association in Jamestown, NY and Directions in Independent Living in Olean, NY.

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STRAWW Objectives

- To build on a foundation of Self-Determination, STRAWW focuses on participants strengths and interests, to assist them in the following areas.
- Identify and connect with their own passions in life
- Participate in social and community activities.
- Explore educational and employment opportunities.
- Engage in volunteer opportunities possibly leading to employment.
- Link to community groups, organizations, networks and places able to help them achieve their self-determined goals.

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STRAWW Referrals

- ❑ Meeting basic requirements for participation.
 - ❑ *Referral from a counselor or service provider preferred; personal referrals possible.*
 - ❑ *Be eighteen years or older, with a mental health diagnosis or disability.*
- ❑ Deciding who to contact.
 - ❑ *Contact 716-532-5508, Ext. 15 for information and referral forms. Submit referrals to STRAWW Program Offices, 75 Jamestown Street, Gowanda, New York.*
 - ❑ *Agency partners can also be contacted for further information at DIL in Olean, MHA Chautauqua in Jamestown, and the Olean STRAWW Office.*

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Recovery Center Youth Work Program

The Recovery Center Youth Work Program is an expansion of Housing Options Made Easy, Inc.'s Recovery Center in Cattaraugus County. We are funded by the Cattaraugus Community Services through the Office of Mental Health.

The Youth Work Program assists transitional youths ages 16-25. We focus on youths with mental health challenges to assist them in obtaining a job or furthering their education.



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The Renewal Center

- An after hours place to go if you feel you are in crisis but do not know where to go. The It offers:
 - ❑ Peer Support
 - ❑ Nursing Staff
 - ❑ Linkages to Community Resources
 - ❑ Safe Non-judgmental Environment


Open 7 days a week from 3pm-11pm
Restoration Society's Empowerment Center
267 Elm St.



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Peer Support Groups

- Part of the respite program is a regularly scheduled peer support group that is open to all current and past guests of the respite as well a open to the public
- The group is an opportunity for people to continue with access to peer support and discuss how a person is doing with the goals they are currently working on



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Training and Advocacy Program

- Training and advocacy classes help people to understand what it means to provide Peer Support. In the training classes, peers work with our peer support trainers to learn more about skills that can support independence and living in the community. Classes include subjects such as advocacy, empowerment, wellness and many others which support the concepts of wellness and recovery. The approach to Peer Support is always person centered and non-judgmental. Additionally, there are classes surrounding the WHAM concept of Whole Health Action Management. The goal of the classes is to provide Whole Health Wellness by connecting mental health with physical health.
- Additionally, there are self-help support groups in the community which give the opportunity for peers to connect on a variety of topics, such as depression, anxiety, social anxiety, PTSD, Bi-Polar disorder, etc.
- All groups are facilitated by a certified peer specialist.



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HCBS Services

- Housing Options is an HCBS Provider for the following services in 18 counties of Western New York and the Finger Lakes Region...
- Empowerment (peer Support)
- Habilitation
- Education
- Prevocational
- Psych/Social Rehab
- Housing Options is an HCBS provider in Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Erie Counties for Short Term Stay Crisis Respite.



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