

Virtual Community Newsletter

September 2019

Welcome to our monthly newsletter of events, articles, job openings, and resources for the peer support workforce in New York State.



The Academy of Peer Services Term 3 Ends Nov. 29, 2019

2020 Academy of Peer Services Calendar

Term 1 Opens 1/6/20 and Closes 3/30/20
Term 2 Opens: 4/27/20 and Closes 7/20/20
Term 3 Opens: 8/17/20 and Closes 11/23/20

Stop by to visit us “live” at our exhibit table and workshops at the upcoming NYAPRS and New York Peer Specialist Certification Board Conferences!

About the Virtual Community



The Virtual Community is a project of the Academy of Peer Services intended to bridge the gap between knowledge gained in the online courses and developing skills for putting knowledge into practice in the real world. The Virtual Community is open to the peer support workforce (anywhere, any role) to help people to connect, communicate, and collaborate.

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Letter from Coordinator, Rita Cronise



We're now a month into Fall term, which will continue until November 29, 2019. Wherever we go we get a lot of questions about certification. While the Academy does provide certificates of completion for each course, APS does not grant or renew the (OMH) NYCPS-P or NYCPS Standard certification. That process is managed by the New York Peer Specialist Certification Board.

We are giving a joint presentation at the NYAPRS Conference this week, "Behind the Scenes at the Academy of Peer Services and the New York Peer Specialist Certification Board." This month, we're beginning a column, "Ask Maryam" by Maryam Husamudeen our NYAPRS User Support Specialist, where she'll answer some of the common questions she receives.

New Feature

"Ask Maryam", by Maryam Husamudeen, Academy of Peer Services User Support Specialist



Question #1

How is the Academy of Peer Services (APS) different from the NY Peer Specialist Certification Board?

Answer:

APS offers the online courses and tests that are used as a *first step* in the certification process. The Certification Board sets the standards for what qualifies for certification (there are different types and levels of certification), reviews completed applications and grants certification when all of the requirements as specified in the application have been met. Most of the questions about certification go to the [New York Peer Specialist Certification Board](#).

Two frequently asked questions (FAQ) documents where you can learn more:

[APS FAQ](#) | [NYPSCB FAQ](#)

Letter from Coordinator (continued)



This webinar will focus on the benefits of certification, provide a brief history of peer certification in New York State and explain why two distinct certifications exist for peer services in mental health and substance use settings. The presentation will address differences between the mental health and addiction service systems and roles peers play within those systems as well as areas for common practices.

The presentation will be followed by a question and answer session.



October 1 Webinar: Joseph Swinford and Ruth

Another area where we get questions is in relation to the certifications for peer recovery advocates and peer coaches who are providing support services in addiction treatment and recovery. Unlike the peer specialist certification developed for people with mental health challenges through the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) these certifications were funded and developed through the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS).

If you have questions or want to know more about the differences between these peer support certifications, attend our October 1 webinar: A Tale of Two Certifications, CPS and CRPA with Joe Swinford, manager of the New York Peer Specialist Certification Board and Ruth Riddick, who is with the Association of Addiction Services and Professionals (NYASAP). To register, click [here](#).

Participate in research!



Jonathan P Edwards

Starting this month, you have a new opportunity to contribute to knowledge about peer support and to also help one of our esteemed colleagues who is a peer, supervisor of peer staff, and doctoral candidate living in New York. The study title is: *Exploring Factors Associated with Satisfaction Among Peer Support Staff in Mental Health Treatment*. For the study, Principle Investigator: Jonathan Edwards is seeking participants to complete a survey. To learn more, [click here](#).

New APS Course (and Webinar) on Supporting Financial Wellness



Oscar Jimenz-Solomon

A new course: Supporting Financial Wellness – From Hardship to Hope is “coming soon!” It is currently out for a Beta review and we expect to launch the course in October. We had great assistance from volunteers who shared their stories of reclaiming financial wellness. The subject matter expert for this course is Oscar Jimenz-Solomon, with whom I will be co-presenting a Doors to Wellbeing (SAMHSA Technical Assistance Center) webinar on Tuesday, September 24 at 2:00 pm. Pre-registration is required to attend the webinar. To learn more, [click here](#).

Join us! The APS Virtual Community is a way to connect, communicate, and collaborate!

If you're not already familiar with what our website has to offer, explore the [Virtual Community site \(https://aps-community.org\)](https://aps-community.org) for many opportunities to get connected – we add information each day to the Virtual Community website.



Our twice monthly networking meetings are a way to **connect**.
This newsletter and the website are ways to **communicate**.
Those who share job postings, announcements, invitations to participate in research, and lots more are which we can **collaborate**.

We meet on the 2nd and last Tuesday of each month. Mark your calendar now for these upcoming networking meetings.

- Tuesday, September 24 (7:00 – 8:00 pm) **broadcast from the NYAPRS Conference**
- Tuesday, October 8 at 5:30 – 6:30 pm
- Tuesday, October 29 at 5:30 – 6:30 pm
- Tuesday, November 12 at 5:30 – 6:30 pm
- Tuesday, November 26 at 5:30 – 6:30 pm
- Tuesday, December 10 at 5:30 – 6:30 pm
- Tuesday, December 31 at 5:30 – 6:30 pm

To attend, you need to subscribe to our free Virtual Community mailing list. The connection link is sent to the full mailing list before each meeting. **To subscribe, [click here](#).**

Deadlines



Deadline to register - October 1, 2019



Regional Advisory Committee Meeting for Consumers and Families

Monday, October 7, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

(Statewide Video Teleconference at New York State Facilities)

For the Agenda and Registration link, [click here](#).

Deadlines (continued)

Deadline to apply - October 2, 2019



Certified Personal Medicine Coach (Pat Deegan)

The next 8-week online course with Pat Deegan starts on Wednesday, October 9. The program is for peer specialists, family members, rehab practitioners, and clinicians. To learn more and receive a 20% discount, [click here](#).

Deadline to apply (Spring 2020 Term) – November 1, 2019



HTH Peer Training Program

For more information, please join us at one of our upcoming Information Sessions: Friday, September 27 or Friday, October 25. (Each session will start promptly at 1:30 p.m., with the doors closing at 1:40 p.m. The sessions will end around 3 p.m.). To learn more and access an application, [click here](#).

Now Accepting Applications for 2020



The Mental Health Training for Juvenile Justice (MHT-JJ) Train the Trainer
National Center for Youth Opportunity and Justice
For more, [click here](#).

Calendar of Events



Mark Your Calendar

(Note: The dates for some events may have changed since previous announcements in the newsletter. The online calendar will usually have the most up to date information.)

September 20 & 21, 2019, 8:30 am-4:30 pm both days | Buffalo/Erie County
Assisting Individuals in Crisis Training (ICISF) | [Registration](#)

September 20, 6:00 - 8:00 pm | Oneonta
Recovery Awards Dinner, FOR-DO | Tickets \$10 until 9/13; \$15 at the door | [Learn more](#)

September 21, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

September 22, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

September 23-25, 2019 | Buffalo
Training of Trainers (ToT) and Ethics Training | CCAR Recovery Coach Academy | [Learn more](#)

September 23-25, 2019 | Webcast
Introduction to Peer Staff Supervision (Interactive Training with Robyn Priest)
Centre for Innovation in Peer Support | [Learn more](#)

Calendar (continued)

September 24, 2:00 - 3:00 pm | Webinar

Financial Wellness with Oscar Jimenez-Solomon | Doors to Wellbeing | [Learn more](#)

September 24, 2:00 - 3:00 pm | Webinar

Justice-Involved Peer Support | Mental Health America | [Learn more](#)

September 24, 7:00 – 8:00 pm (new time!) | Networking Call

Peer Specialists and Supervisors | APS Virtual Community | [Subscribe for Notification](#)

September 24-26, 2019 | NYAPRS Annual Conference

Villa Roma Resort in Callicoon, NY | [Program](#)

September 26, 2:00-3:30 pm | Webinar

How to Embed Strategic Planning into the Culture of Your Organization | NEC | [Register](#)

September 26, 7-8:30 pm | Live Support Group in Ronkonkoma

Healing Connections | Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

September 27, 9:00 am - 12:00 noon | Cobleskill

Sex Trafficking, Addiction, and Recovery | [Learn more](#)

September 27, 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm | Webinar

911 Diversion in Broome County: From Concept to Implementation, Results, Improvements
Pre-Registration is required. | [Registration information](#)

September 28, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group

Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

September 29, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group

Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

September 30, 2:30 pm | Webinar

How to Make Community Inclusion a Reality, with Celia Brown | [Access information](#)

October 1, 12:15-1:00 (followed by Q&A) | Webinar

A Tale of Two Certifications: CPS and CRPA with Joe Swinford and Ruth Riddick

APS Virtual Community Faces and Places of Peer Support Webinar Series | [Register](#)

October 1, 2-3:00 pm (Eastern) | Webcast

Introduction to Peer Support in the Workplace with Robyn Priest

Centre for Innovation in Peer Support | [Learn more](#)

October 2, 9:00 am - 3:30 pm | Syracuse

NAMI Educational Conference | [Learn more](#)

Calendar (continued)

October 3, 7-8:30 pm | Live Support Group in Ronkonkoma
Healing Connections | Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

October 4, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm | Training in Syracuse
Motivational Interviewing: Spirit, Skills, and Practice | [Learn More](#)

October 4, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm | Conference in Syracuse
Justice Center Conference | [Learn more](#)

October 5, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

October 6, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

October 7, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm | OMH Statewide Videoconference
Regional Advisory Committee Meeting for Consumers and Families
New York State Office of Mental Health | For the Agenda and Registration link, [click here](#).

October 8, 5:30 – 6:30 pm | Networking Call
Peer Specialists and Supervisors | APS Virtual Community | [Subscribe for Notification](#)

October 9, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm | (Amsterdam) Fulton and Montgomery Counties
This is How it Feels: *Attempting suicide and finding life by Craig Miller* | [More information](#)

October 10, 10:00 - 11:30 am | Syracuse
Regional Planning Consortium - Stakeholder Meeting | [Learn more](#)

October 10, 10:30 am - 3:00 pm | Syracuse
Rainbows & Prevention: Understanding LGBTQ+ & Substance Use Prevention
Community Library of Dewitt and Jamesville | [Learn more](#)

October 10, 7-8:30 pm | Live Support Group in Ronkonkoma
Healing Connections | Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

October 11, 12:00 - 1:15 pm | Webinar
Medicaid Buy-In (Regina Shoen) for the Leadership and Professional Development Series
New York City Peer and Community Worker Workforce Consortium | Details Coming Soon

October 12, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

October 13, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

Calendar (continued)

October 16, 2019 (starting date) | NAMI Homefront Online Program
6-Session for families, friends, and significant others of military Service Members and Veterans
Daytime and Evening Sessions available | [Learn More](#)

October 17, 7-8:30 pm | Live Support Group in Ronkonkoma
Healing Connections | Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

October 18, 1:00 - 4:00 pm | Binghamton
Regional New Hire Orientation | NYAPRS Collective | [Flyer](#)

October 19, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm | New York City
NYC Mental Health Film Fest | Community Access | [Learn more](#)

October 19, 12:00 - 4:00 pm | **Ronkonkoma (Long Island)**
Chili Cook Off and Fall Festival | [Learn more](#)

October 19, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

October 20, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

October 20-23, 2019 | Conference in Albany
Annual NYS Conference bringing together the Recovery Community | [Learn More](#)

October 21-23, 2019 | Conference in San Diego
13th International Association of Peer Supporters (iNAPS) Conference | [Learn More](#)

October 23, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm | Training in Rochester
Day 1: The Spirit of Motivational Interviewing with Cheryl Martin | CCSI | [Learn More](#)

October 24, 7-8:30 pm | Live Support Group in Ronkonkoma
Healing Connections | Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

October 26, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

October 27, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

October 29, 5:30 – 6:30 pm | Networking Call
Peer Specialists and Supervisors | APS Virtual Community | [Subscribe for Notification](#)

October 29, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm | Training in Rochester
Day 2: The Skills of Motivational Interviewing with Cheryl Martin | CCSI | [Learn More](#)

Calendar (continued)

October 30, 9:00 am - 12:00 noon | Syracuse
Regional New Hire Orientation | NYAPRS Collective | [Flyer](#)

October 31, 7-8:30 pm | Live Support Group in Ronkonkoma
Healing Connections | Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

October 31 and November 1, 2019 | Conference in Albany
Mental Health Association in New York State (MHANYS) | [Flyer](#)

November 1, 12:15-1:00 | Webinar
Jail Diversion and Reentry Program at the NRCIL
APS Virtual Community Faces and Places of Peer Support Series | Details Coming Soon

November 2, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

November 3, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

November 3-6, 2019 | Conference in New Orleans
National Dialogues on Behavioral Health 60th Annual Conference
Renaissance New Orleans Arts Hotel | [For more information](#)

November 4, 1:00 - 4:00 pm | Buffalo
Regional New Hire Orientation | NYAPRS Collective | [Flyer](#)

November 7, 7-9:00 pm | Rockland County
Comedy Night | Bridges | [Flyer](#)

November 7, 7-8:30 pm | Live Support Group in Ronkonkoma
Healing Connections | Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

November 9, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

November 10, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

November 12-15, 2019 | Conference in Florida
CCAR National Recovery Conference, Punta Gorda, FL | [Learn More](#)

November 12, 5:30 – 6:30 pm | Networking Call
Peer Specialists and Supervisors | APS Virtual Community | [Subscribe for Notification](#)

Calendar (continued)

November 14, 2019 | Conference in New Jersey
NJ PRA Conference | Edison, New Jersey | [Learn More](#)

November 14, 7-8:30 pm | Live Support Group in Ronkonkoma
Healing Connections | Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

November 16, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

November 17, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

November 18-19, 2019 | NYPSCB Conference in Poughkeepsie
New York Peer Specialist Certification Board Conference | [Register](#)

November 21, 7-8:30 pm | Live Support Group in Ronkonkoma
Healing Connections | Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

November 23, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

November 24, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

November 26, 5:30 – 6:30 pm | Networking Call
Peer Specialists and Supervisors | APS Virtual Community | [Subscribe for Notification](#)

November 30, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 1, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 5, 7-8:30 pm | Live Support Group in Ronkonkoma
Healing Connections | Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 7, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 8, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 10, 5:30 – 6:30 pm | Networking Call
Peer Specialists and Supervisors | APS Virtual Community | [Subscribe for Notification](#)

Calendar (continued)

December 12, 7-8:30 pm | Live Support Group in Ronkonkoma
Healing Connections | Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 14, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 15, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 19, 7-8:30 pm | Live Support Group in Ronkonkoma
Healing Connections | Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 21, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 22, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 26, 7-8:30 pm | Live Support Group in Ronkonkoma
Healing Connections | Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 28, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 29, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Healing Connections - Online Support Group
Association for Mental Health and Wellness | [Flyer](#)

December 31, 5:30 – 6:30 pm | Networking Call
Peer Specialists and Supervisors | APS Virtual Community | [Subscribe for Notification](#)

For a record of Past Events, [click here](#).



The online [Calendar](#) is updated regularly. Check between newsletters for the latest events.

To share an event, send email to academy.virtual.community@gmail.com.

The deadline for the next newsletter is October 11, 2019.

What's Happening (Ongoing Programs)



In addition to the online [Calendar](#), we've created a [What's Happening](#) page for ongoing programs, projects, or training opportunities that don't have a specific date or time but are related to peer support. The purpose is to inspire you with innovative works and encourage you to reach out to each other to learn more. Some of the newest additions (or updates to prior programs) include:

[Friendship Benches](#) - This is a program that started as part of ThriveNYC and since its founding two years ago, the peers have talked to some 50,000 people and given light counseling and help in navigating city resources to about 9,000. New coverage of this initiative includes:

- For a New York Times article about this innovative program, [click here](#).
- For a Good Morning America video segment, [click here](#).
- For coverage by ABC News, [click here](#).

[Healing Connections](#) is a peer-led support group in both live and online formats. The in-person groups are held every Thursday, from 7:00 - 8:30 pm at the Association for Mental Health and Wellness, 939 Johnson Ave, Ronkonkoma (Long Island). The online peer support groups are held on Saturday and Sunday evenings from 6:30 - 7:30 pm. To learn more, [click here](#).

[OnTrackNY](#) is an innovative treatment program for adolescents and young adults who have had unusual thoughts and behaviors, or who have started hearing or seeing things that others don't. OnTrackNY helps people achieve their goals for school, work, and relationships. Programs are located throughout New York State.

[Mental Health Association in New York State \(MHANYS\)](#) offers an [annual Awards Dinner and Conference](#) (this year on October 31 and Nov 1 in Albany) and a wide range of on-site events and in-person training programs. For their catalog of training, [click here](#).

[myStrength App](#) - We have witnessed our loved ones' struggles to overcome the cost, inaccessibility, and stigma of care and treatment. The vision for myStrength, *The health club for your mind™*, was born as we realized that the Internet and mobile applications provide a perfect way to help those in need. Digital resources that complement other forms of care, such as medication and working with a behavioral health professional, could give users support that is affordable, accessible, and devoid of the negative image that behavioral healthcare sometimes carries.

[NAMI Homefront](#) is a free, online 6-session program for family, friends and significant others of military Service Members and Veterans. The class connects people around the country and helps families understand what the service member/ veteran is experiencing related to trauma, combat stress, civilian life transition, and mental health conditions. The next classes start on October 16. To register, [click here](#).

Calendar | What's Happening (continued)

[Psych Ward Greeting Cards](#) is a project of [ForLikeMinds.com](#). Psych Ward Greeting Cards makes it easy for empathic and compassionate people to let patients in the psych ward know that people, even strangers, care about them and support them. ForLikeMinds created and manages this program to deliver greeting cards from strangers to psychiatric patients at participating hospitals. As insignificant as it may seem, sharing a card can have a wonderful impact when a patient is at their lows – offering help, encouragement, and hope. To learn more, [click here](#).

[Reclaiming Employment Business Directory](#) is a directory of small businesses in the U.S. that are operated by people with psychiatric histories. We feature a different business every two weeks, highlighting the business in the directory as well as advertising across our social media platforms. If you have a small business to list, [click here](#).

To view the full “What’s Happening” page on the Virtual Community Site, [click here](#).

To share something on this page of the website (any time), send email to academy.virtual.community@gmail.com.

Articles

Reaching out to eliminate disparities in behavioral health care in New York State

Reprinted from the Office of Mental Health Newsletter, September Edition



“Mental and behavioral health is a critical and frequently unaddressed matter in racial and ethnic minority communities,” according to a paper by the American Psychological Association (APA). “Blacks, Latinos, American Indians/Alaska Natives, and Asian Americans are over-represented in populations that are particularly at risk

for mental health disorders,” the paper added, noting that there is an inadequate provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health care in these communities.

As a result, symptoms of individuals in these communities may be “undiagnosed, under-diagnosed, or misdiagnosed for cultural, linguistic, or historical reasons.” Social factors that influence health Our physical and mental health and well-being are influenced by the conditions in which we live, learn, work, and play.

Articles (continued)

In its Healthy People 2020 program, the U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) calls these the “**social determinants of health.**” They include a broad range of basic factors such as environment, housing, education, food, economic opportunity, and safety. They also include more complex issues such as access to health care services and insurance, protection from racism and discrimination, and public and private policies and programs that prioritize individual and community health.

These factors can influence health outcomes for entire populations, according to the ODPHP. When a society works to improve these factors and promote justice and equity, it creates conditions for health at the personal and community levels. ([Continue reading](#))

Exploring the Value of Peer Support for Mental Health, Nicola Davies, PhD.

Reprinted from *Psychiatry Advisor*, July 18, 2019

What does the scientific evidence say?



Systematic reviews have confirmed that, while peer support and clinical practice typically perform fairly equally on traditional outcome measures like rehospitalization and relapse, peer support scores better in areas related to the recovery process.¹ In particular, peer support tends to offer greater levels of self-efficacy, empowerment, and engagement.² This mechanism of benefit could come from the social connectedness experienced from interacting with peers, with one study showing that people with

serious mental illness such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and other psychoses value the sense of group belonging that comes from sharing personal stories.³ The mutual exchange of strategies to cope with the everyday challenges of living with a mental illness is also an important aspect of the peer-to-peer community.

There is a lot of value in sharing with people who have overcome similar mental health challenges,” says psychotherapist Hilary Jacobs Hendel, author of the award-winning book, *It’s Not Always Depression* (<http://www.hilaryjacobshendel.com>). “Peer support builds confidence and hope for healing.” Indeed, in a meta-study, Dr Daniela Fuhr and colleagues found that peers have the potential to deliver care to persons with serious mental illness that can result in improved quality of life as a result of such increases in hope.⁴ ([Continue reading](#))

As found in [The Key Update, September Issue](#)

Articles (continued)

How Peer Support Fits the Recovery Model

Reprinted from Center for Peer Support Newsletter: September 2019

The recovery model in mental health care is centered on the belief that individuals with mental health conditions can lead full, rewarding, self-directed lives. It focuses on an individual's strengths and places trust in them to take an active role in their treatment, valuing them as an expert in their own experiences. Peer support is an effective and essential element of recovery-oriented mental health systems.

The essence of peer support is to spark hope and support individuals in reaching long-term recovery. Peers act as role models, demonstrating what life in recovery looks like. When individuals in crisis interact with someone who has faced similar challenges and is now thriving, they can see themselves living in recovery as well.

The world of peer support focuses beyond symptoms; instead of striving for full symptom resolution, it emphasizes resilience and building skills so individuals can live meaningful lives in their communities. Peers advocate for the care of *people* - not a checklist of symptoms.

Peer support is rooted in civil rights and humane treatment. Defining people by their diagnosis or acting as though their mental health challenges control them denies those individuals the opportunity to recover. By modeling recovery and advocating for the importance of a person-centered approach to care, peer support specialists can make a real difference in the lives of people experiencing mental health challenges. September is National Recovery Month. For more, [click here](#).

Five things we learned from Dana Foglesong

Reprinted from Center for Peer Support Newsletter: August 2019

When Dana Foglesong first worked with a Peer Support Specialist, she felt a spark of hope for the first time in a long time – she finally had an example of someone who had experienced similar mental health challenges. Since becoming a peer support specialist herself, she feels her insider perspective has given her the ability to make real change. Through her work in Florida and on the board of directors for the International Association of Peer Supporters (iNAPS) she has been able to “expand the peer support workforce in a meaningful way.”

To hear her perspective as a leader in mental health, we sat down with Dana to get her thoughts on the current state and future of peer support. [Continue reading](#)

Articles (continued)

A tribute to Janet Foner, Co-Founder of MindFreedom

Janet Foner, a longtime mental health liberation activist, passed away on July 24, 2019.

The following tribute was written by Lauren Spiro and David Oaks.



*Janet Foner, co-founder of
MindFreedom, International*

From Lauren Spiro:

We lost a giant today — a woman who, more than anyone else in my life, taught me what it meant to live a life of courage, integrity, thinking outside the box and how to be genuine while also strategic in building relationships that have had a huge impact on the world. Janet Foner was one of the most remarkable people I have ever had the pleasure My first significant memory of her was over 20 years ago during a [Re-evaluation Counseling](#) mental health liberation weekend workshop which Janet led.

She held a 7am support group for ex-psychiatric inmates and it was my first time ever going to such a group. She took turns “counseling” us one at a time surrounded by everyone else. She knew my mental health story (from previous interactions) yet in my turn she asked me to say, “There was never anything wrong with me.” It shocked me and struck me as a completely wild and crazy idea, given that she knew I had been labeled with chronic schizophrenia by more than one psychiatrist and I had been on and off psychopharmaceuticals for many years. I thought her direction to me was absolutely ridiculous, yet, she was a worldwide leader whom I deeply respected and trusted. So what was I to do but to try and say this “There was never anything wrong with me.” Well I said it, in this small and safe group, with affect that was flat as a pancake. Janet said, “Say it like you mean it” and she stayed with me in a loving and supportive way, urging me to take it in, to consider that notion. She never pushed hard. And over the many years that I (and hundreds of others) worked with her within the RC community she always created a safe and respectful space, inviting us to consider new ways of cleaning our perceptual lens and working towards the world we wanted to create. [Continue reading](#)

From David Oaks:

Janet Foner: Thanks for Your Lifetime of Mental Health Liberation, and Three Decades of Wonderful Friendship! This is hard to do. I miss you! I valued our regular Facetimes, with you in Harrisburg, PA and me in Oregon. Recently, I talked about updating and reissuing a poster you created many years ago for MindFreedom International. By far, this was our most popular piece of public education, appearing on walls all over the world: Title: [“The 10 Warning Signs of Normality.”](#) Readers of that humorous poster would not know that this was based on part of one of your actual workshops, which I had the pleasure of attending several times, about what is this thing we call “normality” and why do so many in the public believe it exists? [Continue reading](#)

Articles (continued)

Turning Suicidal Ideation Into Hope

By Katherine Ponte, BA, JD, MBA, NYCPS-P, CPRP | NAMI Blog Sep. 11, 2019



From an early age, I was driven by conventional markers of success: academic and professional accomplishment and most importantly, financial wealth. As the child of immigrant parents, these markers were particularly important to me. I saw money as a measure that transcended cultural barriers and norms. Enough of it would establish my worth in our adopted home.

So, I worked diligently toward this dream. I excelled in school. I graduated high school early and completed college and then law school. First, I was a lawyer, and then, I wanted to become an investment banker, so I could have even greater earning power.

My early career was a life of work and nothing else. I would proudly work 14-16 hours a day, including weekends. I'd brag about how I could pull all-nighters. I wanted to be a workaholic. I saw others in the same field working just as hard as I was. I came to believe that this was what being successful was all about. Slowly, as I tired of being exhausted all the time, watching the years of my youth pass by, I started to change my views.

My MBA program and early exposure to investment banking only cemented my growing dissatisfaction. How I felt forced me to confront the realities of this career goal. All my life I had worked toward a dream that made me miserable. My ambitions were deflated. And I didn't have a backup plan, so I wasn't able to redirect my energy elsewhere. Depression took over. It took away all my hope. Then I had my first manic episode. That manic episode combined with several more in the coming years swallowed me up and hijacked my life.

From Dreams To Suicidal Ideation

Suddenly, I was "bipolar." To me, this could have no place in my success. I tried to dismiss the first manic episode and the diagnosis. I convinced myself that it was a one-time anomaly and not a part of me. I refused to come to terms with my bipolar disorder. This refusal would lead me toward self-destruction. [Continue reading.](#)

For more by Katherine, visit: [The Power to Create Change blog post](#), [Shared Decision Making blog post](#), [LGBTQ blog post](#), [Immigrant blog post](#).

You can also start or join a discussion at Katherine's discussion platform [ForLikeMinds.com](#).

Related Newsletters



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[Words of Wellness \(Swarbrick & Nemeč\)](#)

For recent Articles on Criminal Justice, the Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse publishes a monthly digest. To view the latest issue, visit [*The Key Update*](#).

Send personal articles or blogs about your life as a Peer Specialist or Supervisor of Peer Specialists to: academy.virtual.community@gmail.com

The deadline for the next newsletter is October 11, 2019.

Research



Research Studies Seeking Participants

Study 1: *Exploring Factors Associated with Satisfaction Among Peer Support Staff in Mental Health Treatment.* Principle Investigator: Jonathan P. Edwards is seeking participants to complete a survey. To learn more, [click here](#).

Study 2: *Supervisors of Peer Support Workers Survey.* University of South Florida's Dept. of Psychiatry and at Magellan Health are seeking participants who currently supervise at least one peer support worker to complete an online survey about their training, supervision experiences and practices, and related views. To learn more, [click here](#).

Study 3: *Experiences with Hospitalization Survey.* The purpose of this survey is to help us understand people's lived experience with voluntary and involuntary treatment because of suicidal thoughts. It was created by people with lived experience. This survey takes most people 20-30 minutes. We are planning to use this information to facilitate discussions with suicidologists and the suicide prevention community about the impact of the use of these interventions, particularly within marginalized populations. We feel the voice of people with lived experience with these interventions has not had adequate opportunity to be heard, and hope that by completing this survey anonymously, people who have been most impacted can find a safe way to share their experiences. *Please note that this is not a research project.* To learn more, [click here](#).

Study 4: *Defining Peer Support under the Dept. of Labor.* **Your feedback is requested.** Currently, a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) for peer support specialists does not exist. The lack of such a classification means that national information about peer support workers is not readily available. On behalf of iNAPS, a national workgroup has developed a proposed definition for peer support specialist to submit for federal standard occupational classification through the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). To learn more, [click here](#).

Recent Research Articles & Reports

New study shows peer-delivered trauma treatment promising for rural communities

Reprinted from Center for Peer Support Newsletter: August 2019

A new study examined the effectiveness of peers versus behavioral health clinicians in running a trauma recovery program ([Seeking Safety](#)). Both the peer groups and the clinician groups demonstrated similar outcomes in reducing PTSD symptoms and increasing coping skills. In light of these results, the authors suggest that peers could play a crucial role in helping rural communities meet the demand for trauma-specific treatment. For more, [click here](#).

The Sequential Intercept Model

A SAMHSA brochure provides an overview of the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM). The SIM is a strategic planning tool that helps communities better understand the gaps and resources they have in helping those with mental illness or substance use disorders who are in the criminal justice system. To access the brochure, [click here](#).

Data Collection Across the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM): Essential Measures. A recently released manual provides a starting place for jurisdictions looking to use data to better understand and improve the outcomes of people with mental and/or substance use disorders who come into contact with the criminal justice system. To access the manual, [click here](#).

Peer Support: Research and Reports

In 2017, MHA published an article on the [Case for Peer Support](#). A page on the MHA site continues to gather statistics and links to research reports on the effectiveness of peer support services. To access the page, [click here](#).

SAMHSA: The Value of Peers

Also in 2017, SAMHSA published an infographic on the Value of Peers, listing research reports and pictorial as well as descriptive definitions of what Peer Support workers do. To access, [click here](#).

Do you have research opportunities (seeking participants) or peer reviewed articles that you reference in your own work to share with the peer support workforce?

Send them to academy.virtual.community@gmail.com.

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Resources

Virtual Learning Community Webinars:



The Virtual Community Website has a page devoted to upcoming and recorded webinars that we've offered over the past few years. The latest series, the Faces and Places of Peer Support highlights excellence in peer support services.

To access the page for Virtual Community Webinars, click [here](#).

Resources for Supervisors



The Virtual Community Website has a page devoted to Supervision Resources, including recordings of previous Virtual Community webinars on What Providers Want to Know about Peer Support Services and a series called, Ask the Supervisors with people who have experience in supervising peer support workers.

To access the page for Supervisors, click [here](#).

Other Resources for Peer Specialists

Join the National Peer Specialist Registry

Reprinted from the International Association of Peer Supporters (iNAPS)



A new National Peer Specialist Registry allows peers to display their training and specialties for potential employers. The National Peer Specialist Registry was developed by a collaboration between Doors to Well Being, National Technical Assistance Center, and the International Association of Peer Supporters (iNAPS) supported by a grant from SAMHSA. Those looking to hire peer specialists may use this registry to recruit candidates for employment opportunities and increase the presence of peer support throughout healthcare and communities worldwide. If you choose to register, you may select what information is for public view and what to keep private. [Add your name to the growing list of peers who have registered.](#)



MHA webinar recap: Peer Support for Older Adults

Original broadcast, June 2019

Older adults living with psychiatric labels have unique needs in terms of wellness, improved personal health outcomes, and connections to communities of their choice. They frequently face dramatic changes in their social and employment circumstances. It is a time of life that is often marked by losses of loved ones and grieving. For many it can be fraught with economic uncertainty and lifestyle changes. With the Baby Boomer generation poised to be a large segment of the older adult demographic, there are opportunities to address these unique needs through advocacy, activism, support, and inclusion. Peer support and peer-delivered services should account for all these factors.

In this webinar, Patrick Hendry discusses these issues and the strengths and weaknesses of the behavioral health system in meeting the challenges.

Watch the [recording](#) or [download the slides](#).

SAMHSA's National Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day recording available

Reprinted from Center for Peer Support Newsletter: August 2019

This past May, SAMHSA held their 2nd annual Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day, highlighting the specific needs of older adults. Peer support was a popular topic among speakers discussing effective recovery practices for this growing population.

To view the webcast, click [part one](#) and [part two](#).

Integrated Care: For Providers and Plans for Medicaid-Managed Integration

Focus on Peer Support

Video resources are available free of charge for education and training of the behavioral health workforce. For more, [click here](#).

Recent Publications:

Human Services Research Institute (2019) **Making Self-Direction a Reality: Using Individual Budgets to Promote Choice, Control, and Equity**. To view, click [here](#).

The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Solution Suites for Self-Directed Recovery (2019). **Building Financial Wellness** by Peggy Swarbrick and Pat Nemec. This curriculum imparts valuable knowledge and skills that people need to better manage their personal finances. It includes a 139-page instructor guide and an accompanying 56-page participant workbook. To view, click [here](#).

Do you have resources that you've found helpful to share with others?

Send items for this list to: academy.virtual.community@gmail.com

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Job Bank

Are You a Job Seeker?



Visit our [Job Bank](#) for a list of recent openings. In a given month, we post over 150 peer specialist openings in New York State. If you or someone you know is looking for work, [check here!](#)

Are You Hiring?



Submit peer service job openings to the New York State Dept. of Labor as part of the [Employment First](#) Initiative. Once you have registered with the Dept. of Labor, submit your openings to: academy.virtual.community@gmail.com

Are You Looking for Experience?



Are you seeking hours toward your standard NY Peer Specialist Certification? Do you live in Rockland County? Consider becoming a Compeer Mental Health Volunteer. To learn more, [click here](#).

Do You Have Volunteer Peer Support Opportunities?

If volunteer peer support opportunities, it can be a win/win/win. A win for your organization getting qualified volunteers, a win for peer support certification candidates, and a win for the people who benefit from the support that is provided. If you have opportunities, contact the [New York Peer Specialist Certification Board](#) to ask about what you would need to do to supervise volunteers who are completing the “work” requirements for certification.

Are You Offering APS Training Workshops or Classes?



Are you teaching in-person classes based on the Academy of Peer Services? We can help to advertise your class! We'll post the dates of your classes in our community calendar or What's Happening page and in the newsletter so people can find you. You will also have the chance to locate others around the state teaching similar topics so you can network with each other. To have us list your classes, send email to academy.virtual.community@gmail.com.

About the Virtual Community



The Virtual Learning Community is a project of the Academy of Peer Services intended to help bridge the gap between online learning and the kind of rich interactions between peers that help peers to develop skills they can use in the real world of practice.

This newsletter is one element of the Virtual Learning Community. We also have a Job Bank, hold regular webinars, facilitate online networking meetings, and help to promote training programs and support groups for peer supporters and their supervisors.

Our (opt in) list for announcements is separate from the Academy of Peer Services news feed, which is dedicated specifically for those enrolled in the online courses. To receive information from the Virtual Community, you need to opt-in (a free subscription).

To subscribe, [click here](#).



One of the most vital ways we sustain ourselves is by building communities, places where we know we are not alone. - Bell Hooks

Explore the [Virtual Community site \(https://aps-community.org/\)](https://aps-community.org/) for opportunities to get connected and involved, in your local community or with others across the state. We add information almost every day to the Virtual Community website.

Explore the full Academy of Peer Services for almost 50 online, on-demand, free self-paced courses that are open to and available for anyone with an interest in the field of peer support services.

[Academy of Peer Services](https://www.academyofpeerservices.org)
<https://www.academyofpeerservices.org>

Stop by to visit us “live” at our exhibit table and workshops at the upcoming NYAPRS and New York Peer Specialist Certification Board Conference.