
Entering the Peer Workforce

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-
- What is a peer?
 - History of the peer movement
 - National peer workforce
 - NJ peer workforce and credentialing



What is a peer?



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A peer supporter is...

“An individual who has made a personal commitment to his or her own recovery, has maintained that recovery over a period of time, has taken special training to work with others, and is willing to share what he or she has learned about recovery in an inspirational way.”

-International Association of Peer Supporters



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What Principles Guide Peer Work?

HOPE

Respect

Relationship Building

Growth

Responsibility

Person-Driven

Holistic

Mutuality

System Transformation

Culturally Based

Destigmatization

Trauma Awareness



Roles and Skills of a Peer

Possible Roles:

Listener

Resource Finder

Facilitator

Inspirer of Hope

Encourager

Needed Skills:

Advocacy

Ability to be a Team Player

Communication

Ability to show empathy

Desire to Help Others

Ability to be Non-judgmental

Practice Challenges

Engaging Peers

Co-worker Attitudes

Being Non-Judgmental

Working with Many Cultures

Paperwork



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Recovery vs. Illness Story

RECOVERY STORY

Focuses on change being possible

Highlights an individual's strengths

Is future-minded

Promotes health and wellness

Discusses overcoming barriers

Shares what has worked for you

ILLNESS STORY

Focuses on the impact of a diagnosis

Discusses the disabling effects

Shares worst stories

Promotes reliving difficult times

Supports thinking of life as limited

Lends itself to the belief that this is the way life will always be



Why is the Recovery Story Powerful?

- Hearing the truth, hope, and possibilities in your recovery story is inspirational
- Authenticity in hearing a personal story just the way it happened
- It is one of the major tools in a peer supporter's toolbox



History of the Peer Movement

- Deinstitutionalization
- Self- help / Mutual Support
- COMHCO
- Peer Outreach Support Teams (POST)



About Consumer Connections

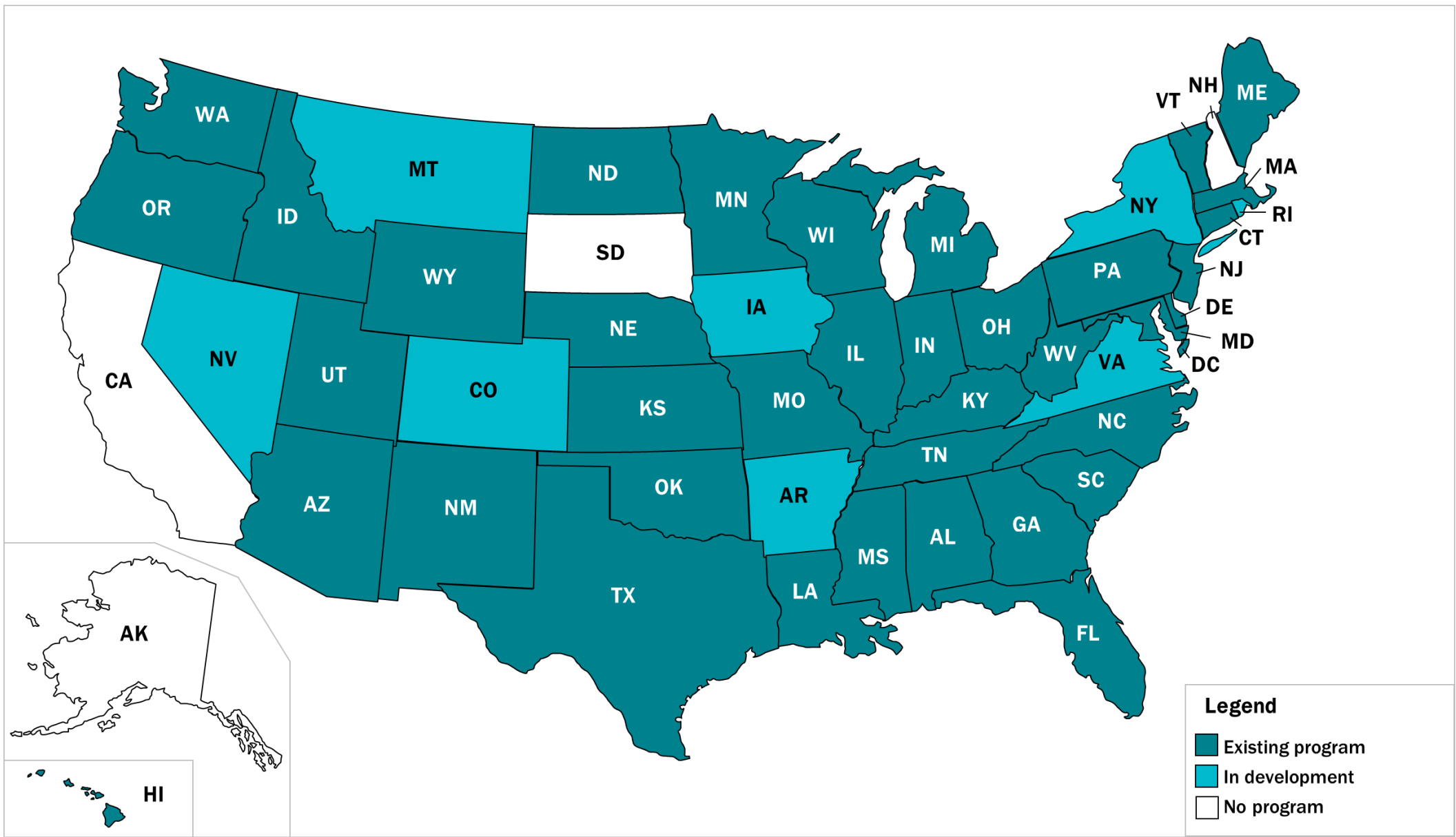
- **Early 1990's:** MHANJ secured grant funding to create a pilot project to train consumers as outreach workers and case managers. The grant also allowed the MHANJ to create Peer Outreach Support Teams (POST) which employed the newly trained consumers in homeless outreach programs.
- **1997:** The project was reborn as Consumer Connections through a contract with the NJ Division of Mental Health Services.
 - The initial mission of Consumer Connections was to train consumer providers to work in Programs for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT), in Integrated Case Management Services (ICMS) and in staff expanded self help centers
 - 350 consumers were trained within the first three years
 - Ninety five percent of the participants completed the training
 - 70% secured employment within NJ's mental health system



Peer Certification and Training

- Certification is relatively new: the first state recognized peer certification program was developed in 2001
- As of 2014, 38 states and the District of Columbia have established programs to train and certify peer specialists
- As of 2014, 8 states were actively in the process of creating such training and certification programs





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Leaders in Peer Certification

- South Carolina: 40 hours of training, proof of presentation experience telling recovery story, written and oral exams
- Georgia: Attend 2 week training and pass exam
- Wisconsin: Attend one of 4 approved training programs, 3 hour exam
- Massachusetts: 2 letters of recommendation, 13 week training course, written and oral exams

**Of special note: Although New York state does not have a certification program, one of the longest running and most comprehensive peer education programs in the country is there. Howie the Harp information can be found at: <http://www.communityaccess.org/what-we-do/hth-peer-advocacy-ctr>



New Jersey

Credential Name: Certified Recovery Support Practitioner (CRSP)

- Credentialing body: The Certification Board of New Jersey
 - www.certbd.org
- Completion of 108 hour Consumer Connections CORE training
- Completion of 18 hour WRAP training
- Completion of 500 hours approved work experience
- No Exam



Mission

Consumer Connections, a program of The Mental Health Association in New Jersey, is dedicated to strengthening and expanding peer workforce development. Through the creation of high quality training and educational opportunities, our goal is to empower individuals working as Peer Specialists to use their lived experience to support others in moving toward wellness and recovery.



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Vision

To offer state of the art training and support to peers seeking to develop the skills and competencies necessary to work as Peer Recovery Specialists in the State of NJ.



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Values

- Ensure Consumer Connections screening and application processes provide opportunity for informed decision-making, appropriate selection of candidates, and viable alternatives to each peer seeking guidance.
- Ensure the Consumer Connection Core Training program learning objectives and content are current and offer viable peer recovery specialist competencies.
- Address any grievances or appeals from participants regarding the Core training.
- Ensure Consumer Connections policies and procedures reflect established and best practices for professional peer workforce development.
- Ensure CRSP certification and recertification processes and training opportunities are relevant, and clearly presented to Core peer graduates.
- Ensure that consumers are provided continuing education opportunities which support competency and further vocational development to achieving and sustaining their role as professional peer recovery specialists.
- Advocate within the state to establish higher education learning opportunities, and expansion of professional career opportunities for Peer Specialists.



About Consumer Connections

○ Awards:

- The National Mental Health Association's Innovative Program of the Year Award
- The Eli Lilly Reintegration Award for an Advocacy Program
- The National Association of County Behavioral Health Directors' Award for Innovation in Community Behavioral Healthcare
- US Department of Labor's recognition as a "Best Practice" in workforce development for consumer providers
- The Commonwealth Fund recognition as a promising innovation in behavioral healthcare
- The Annapolis Coalition's Consumer Innovation Programming Award
- The National Association of Peer Specialists recognition as a national model for training



Training Schedule

- 3 CORE trainings in 2015
 - Spring: Middlesex County
 - Summer: Atlantic County
 - Fall: Union County
- 3 CORE trainings in 2016
 - North
 - Central
 - South
- Year round specialty offerings in North/Central/South



Application & Selection Process

- Visit the MHANJ website & complete a program contact form
- Complete a phone interview
- Attend the 18 WRAP training
 - Submit a CORE application, self-assessment, and writing sample



References

Canadian Mental Health Association, 2005. Peer Support Training Manual: CMHA BC Division Consumer Development Project. <http://www.schizophrenia.com/pdfs/psmanual.pdf>

Kaufman, L., Brooks, W., Bellinger, J., Steinley-Bumgarner, M., & Stevens-Manser, S. 2014. Peer Specialist Training and Certification Programs: A National Overview. Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health, School of Social Work, University of Texas at Austin.

Parker, Mark & Uraire, Michael. Making Effective Use of Your Recovery Story in Peer Support Relationships. New England MIRECC Peer Education Center, VA Healthcare. http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn1/docs/products/Making_Effective_Use_of_Your_Recovery_Story_Presentation.pdf



www.mhanj.org/consumer-connections



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