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Intentional Peer Support: An Alternative Approach

Peer support has traditionally meant informal, non-professionalized help from people who have had similar life experiences. In mental health peers come together with many shared experiences including a negative reaction to traditional services.

However without a new framework to build from it is not uncommon to find people re-enacting “help” based on what was done to them. Some people take on positions of power and others fall into passive recipient roles. Therefore, all training emphasizes a critical learning experience in which people mutually explore “how they’ve come to know what they know.”

In other words, through intentional conversations, people examine their assumptions about who they are, what power-shared relationships can look like, and ultimately what’s possible.

This is accomplished through a process of learning about:

- * What makes trauma informed peer support different
- * The Four tasks
- * Listening with intention
- * Challenging old roles
- * Understanding trauma worldview and trauma re-enactment
- * Working towards shared responsibility and shared power
- * Creating a vision
- * Using co-supervision as a tool to maintain values in action

Peer Run Crisis Alternatives

Peer run crisis alternatives are beginning to spring up nationally and internationally. These programs support many people in avoiding psychiatric hospitalization while allowing them to reconsider crisis as an opportunity to learn and grow.

This training provides opportunities to think about difficult, challenging and/or intense situations, and to examine both our own assumptions and fears, and those of the other person/people.

When we learn to sit with our own fear and discomfort we can co-create relationships based on hope and what we are wanting to move towards, rather than focusing on what’s wrong, problems and/or what we don’t want.

Through self-awareness, practice, reflection, receiving feedback and implementing change, we enable one another to redefine crisis as an opportunity for learning and growth.

Specific training components include:

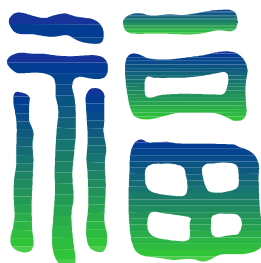
- * Basic trauma informed peer support training
- * Working with intense/difficult situations
- * Working with conflict
- * Negotiating boundaries
- * Pro-active crisis planning
- * Retro-active crisis debrief
- * Supervision and evaluation

Co-Supervision

Intentional Peer Support requires an ongoing commitment to learning and growth.

Co-supervision provides an opportunity to examine our relationships, assumptions and to practice developing our own transformative relationships.

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