Connection to Hope: Mutual Empowerment in Acute Care Settings

Presented by: MacKenzie Phillips, MPH and Justin Larson, CDCA, PRS-S

CONNECTION
TO HOPE

Mutual Empathy and Empowerment in Acute Care Settings

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Thrive Peer Recovery Services is the largest provider of peer support services in Ohio.

Thrive Peer Recovery Services was formed in May 2018 through a combination of Thrive Behavioral Health and the live peer support component of Ascent.

We are contracted with Anthem, Medicaid and all MCO’s and certified by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to provide Type 84 Mental Health Peer Support and Type 95 Substance Use Disorder Peer Support.

Since May 2018, we have grown from a staff of 6 to a staff of 170. 100+ are Certified Peer Recovery Supporters.

We currently provide Peer Support services to individuals in all 88 Ohio counties.
Let's talk about

**PEER SUPPORT**

- Lived experience in recovery from mental health or substance use disorders
- Inspire hope in others for recovery
- Walk alongside individuals on their unique recovery journeys
- Dispel stigma about mental health and substance use
- Provide self-help education and link to resources
- Support in identifying goals and creating roadmaps for growth


**RELATIONAL CULTURAL THEORY**

- RCT is a psychological theory that is built on the premise that human beings grow through and toward connections.
  - Equality as a driver of success
  - Connections are critical to flourish
  - Imbalance of power can restrict the development of mutuality
  - Isolation is viewed as a source of suffering

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MUTUAL EMPOWERMENT

- The process by which individuals, both the Peer Supporter and the peer, experience growth, and positive transformation through their shared connection.
- Emphasizes the strength and significance of authentic human connections.
- Demonstrates that through supportive relationships, individuals can uplift and inspire one another, cultivating resilience, hope, and empowerment as they walk the path of recovery together.

CONNECTION & EMPATHY

Empathetic understanding creates an emotional bridge between individuals, promoting trust and openness, which is essential for healing and transformation.

Empathy is the cornerstone of effective support in Peer Support. It enables the Peer Supporter to actively listen, validate emotions, and provide compassionate assistance.
The Ingredients of Empathy

- **Perspective Taking**: Recognizing that people have different perspectives and considering things from their point of view.
- **Avoiding Judgement**: Avoiding judgement of others if their experience is different from your own.
- **Social Cognition**: Recognizing emotions and feelings in others ('reading the room') and taking action accordingly.
- **Communication**: Communicating with others to explain that you respect their points of view.

[Link to webinar on empathy](https://www.slideshare.net/assocpm/empathy-the-secret-ingredient-to-successful-change-engagement-webinar-13-june-2023)

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RESILIENCE & GROWTH

- Peer support relies on the lived experiences of Peer Supporters, who have themselves demonstrated resilience in overcoming mental health challenges or substance use disorders.

- Peer Support services cultivate a culture of growth and learning, where individuals are encouraged to set recovery goals and work towards positive change.

- This focus on growth enables peers to envision a brighter future and take proactive steps in their recovery process.

SELF REFLECTION

- Think of one of the most difficult events of your life. How you can use this story to help others. How can you leverage it to impact someone in a positive way?

- Consider a current challenge in your life. Reframe the obstacle so that you see it as an opportunity for growth.

“The oak fought the wind and was broken, the willow bent when it must and survived.” - Robert Jordan

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PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT

- Personal empowerment fosters self-efficacy and belief in recovery.
- Empowered individuals take ownership of their recovery journey.
- They also take responsibility for their actions and the impact of substance use on their lives.
- Personal empowerment leads to individuals advocating for their needs and seeking support.
- It fuels intrinsic motivation, increasing commitment to recovery.

PUTTING RECOVERY TOOLS INTO ACTION

- Mutual empowerment
- Connection
- Empathy
- Resilience
- Growth
- Personal empowerment

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ThriveED PROGRAM

- Using shared lived experience in emergency department settings to foster trusting relationships and instill hope

- Embedded directly into the ED setting alongside Social Work, Nurses, and Physicians

- 21 sites, 40 Peer Supporters

UNIQUE SERVICE DELIVERY CONSIDERATIONS

3 PARTY SYSTEM
Peer Supporter, peer, and hospital staff providing peer centered support

IN THE TRENCHES
Boundaries, physical symptom management, home situations often arise

ADVOCACY ROLE
Not the prescriber, but communicating the needs of the peer to maximize service
IDEAL CHARACTERISTICS

STABILITY
- Trigger management
- Strong recovery program

PROFESSIONALISM
- Treatment team spotlight
- Resource coordination

DEESCALATION
- Over stretched hospital staff
- Calm voice over matching fear

BEST PRACTICE: ENGAGING WITH SYSTEMS

EVIDENCE BASED
Data backed information sharing for buy in

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
Local MHRB support, internal social workers, word of mouth from other systems

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS BUILDING
Grand rounds, newsletters, county board emails, presentations
BEST PRACTICE: ENGAGING WITH PEERS

LANGUAGE MATTERS
Stigma free, non-judgmental language

PEER DRIVEN
Embraces all pathways, state of mind, non-clinical, relationship centered

NARRATIVE THERAPY
Active listening, motivational interviewing, organic, relatable

BEST PRACTICE: INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM WORK

TEAM COMPOSITION
ED Manager, Nurse Manager, Social Work Supervisor, Social Workers, Peer Support Team Lead, Peer Supporters

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Participation in rounds, stigma reduction, open communication

LEADING BY EXAMPLE
Example setting on the treatment team
TIPS FOR INTEGRATION

ROLE CLARITY
Peer Supporters are available to enhance services, not replace them

TRUST THE EXPERTS
Value of recognizing the expertise of Peer Supporters in identifying resources for recovery

COMMUNICATION
Communicate early and often

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REFERENCES


