

The Peer Supporter's Role in the Criminal Justice System

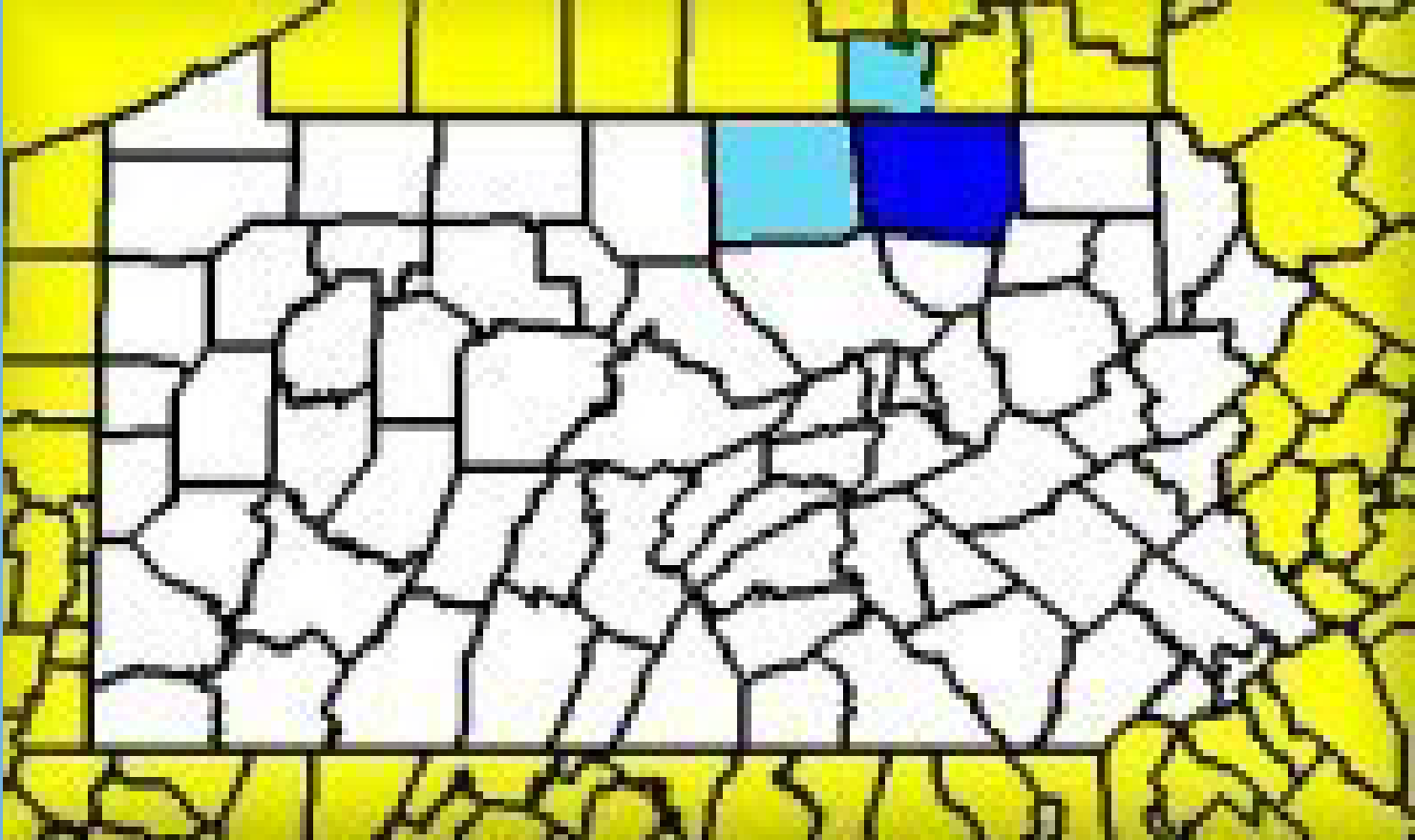
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The Main Link

The Main Link Is a non-profit, Consumer-Run, Service Provider specializing in Peer Support.

- Board of Directors is comprised of 72% Mental Health Consumers
- All employees that provide support services are Mental Health Consumers
- All Program Coordinators control the program budget

Bradford County, PA



Bradford County Correctional Facility

- Capacity of around 200 people
- Currently averaging approximately 140 people

What Makes Peer Support Valuable and Unique?

Peer Support is Support from
someone who has been there and
is your equal

A Forensic Peer Support Worker
understands first hand the
subculture, experiences, and issues
faced by Mental Health
Consumers involved in the
Criminal Justice System

He/she has successfully navigated
through the system *and* has moved
into
active community living

The Role of a Peer Support Worker in the Criminal Justice System is to use their knowledge and lived experience to offer support and advocate for system changes that address barriers to successful community living

Reducing Recidivism through Peer Support

Some Examples

Barriers

- Loss of housing, belongings, and money
- Unfamiliarity with the System
- No appropriate home plan
- Loss of family and positive supports
- More apt to max out
- No transportation to complete parole requirements
- Stigma and misunderstanding of Mental Illness

Peer Support in the Jail Offers:

- **Support** through mail correspondence, in-jail visits, and going to court hearings
- **Clarity** about the court process and probation/parole
- **Opportunity** by working on and redeveloping lost goals
- **Confidence** by encouraging self advocacy and decision making

Outcomes

- Mail correspondence, in-jail visits, and going to court hearings
- Clarify court process and probation/parole
- Work on and redevelop lost goals
- Encourage self advocacy and decision making
- Develops rapport, trust, and a connection with a positive influence
- Eases anxiety about the future and allows individuals to prepare
- Offers alternative pursuits upon release
- Instills confidence and personal responsibility

Peer Support upon Re-entry offers:

- **Transportation** to services and other parole obligations
- **Access** to needed programs (housing programs, food banks, thrift shops)
- **Visits** to the home if a person is on house arrest or **Involvement** in community activities
- **A close support** to express successes and frustrations

Outcomes

- Transportation to services and other parole obligations
- Access to needed programs
- Visits to the home or involvement in community activities
- **A close support**
- Reduces the chance of parole violation
- Assures basic needs are met
- Prevents the testing of limits and begins community living
- Helps stay focused

Thank You

The Main Link

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