



Trauma-Informed Peer Support webinar series

Session 2: Peer Support Basics / Trauma-informed Practices

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The TIPS webinar series

Session 2: September 16, 2014

- Peer Support Basics / Trauma-informed Practices

Session 3: September 23, 2014

- Applying Trauma-Informed Practices to Peer Support

Archived:

Session 1: September 9, 2014 : Intro to Peer Support/
Trauma & its Impact / Cultural Considerations

PEER SUPPORT BASICS

What is Peer Support?

- Some organizations define it as a “helping relationship” like the top-down roles of professionals
- We define it as a flexible approach to building healing relationships among equals, based on a core set of values & principles.

Peer Support is NOT

- A “program model”
- Focused on diagnoses or deficits
- About “helping” in a top-down way
- Being a “counselor”
- Pressuring people to comply with treatment
- Monitoring people’s behavior

Peer support staff are NOT:

- Junior case managers
- Medication enforcers
- The “conscience” of an agency



So what IS Peer Support?



- A natural human response to shared difficulty
- People with shared experiences come together to learn and grow

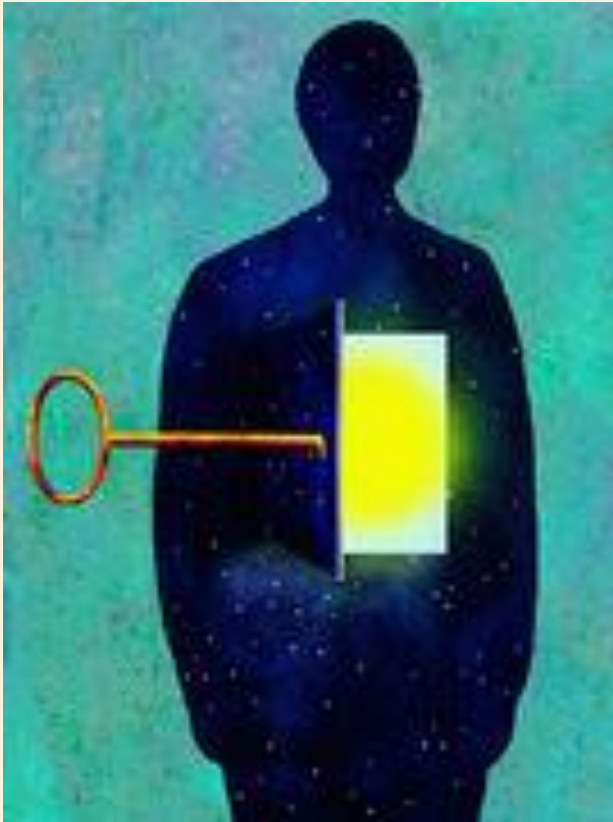
What is Peer Support?

A system of giving & receiving help in relationship with others with shared experience, based on values of:

- Respect
- Shared responsibility
- Mutual agreement of what is helpful

- Shery Mead, founder, Intentional Peer Support

Practices based on the proven idea that people who share common experiences:



- Are best able to understand and empathize with each other
- Can offer each other the benefit of what they've learned

Peer Support

is a unique discipline
with its own
values and
principles



Principles of Peer Support

Peer support is voluntary

- Cannot be mandated: people enter peer support relationships because they're interested in connection
- Peer support is for people who **want** it rather than people who “need” it.

Principles of Peer Support

Peer Support is Non-judgmental

- A non-assessing, non-professional relationship
- Awareness of own biases and privilege
- Honest, direct, but respectful communication; open to other views

Principles of Peer Support

Respecting one another

- Value differences & unique abilities
- Keep people’s confidences
- Respect people’s right to make their own decisions, even “wrong” ones

Principles of Peer Support

Reciprocity

- The importance of give and take
- Re-claiming “help” as a natural process between two or more people
- No one is more “recovered” than another

Principles of Peer Support

Mutual responsibility

- Each person takes responsibility for their actions
- Negotiation of “responsibility”
- Shared power
- It’s not your job to fix anyone!

Principles of Peer Support

Integrity

- Believing in one another
- Holding hope for each other
- Building relationships that focus on one another's well-being
- Confidentiality



TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES

SAMHSA's Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Approaches

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice and Choice
6. Cultural, historical and gender issues

Non Trauma-informed Approaches


- Recreate the fear and helplessness of the original trauma
- Cause distrust, sadness, anger, frustration and confusion
- Survivor reactions are seen as “symptoms” which increases the rationale for “management” and potential for coercion

Trauma-Informed Approaches

- Based on the universal expectation that trauma has occurred
- Focused on understanding “What happened to you?” not “What’s wrong with you?”
- Seek to understand the meaning people make of their experiences.

Trauma-Informed Approaches


- All staff and people who use services are educated about trauma
- Incorporate knowledge about trauma in all aspects of service delivery
- Minimize revictimization – “do no more harm”
- Take particular care to create a welcoming environment



Trauma survivors often have sensitive “radar” for detecting dishonesty and good reasons to be sensitive to misuse of power and authority.

Trauma-Informed Approaches

- Strive to be culturally responsive
- Focus on resilience, self-healing, mutual support, and empowerment
- Ensure voice, safety, autonomy, choice, trustworthiness, and the elimination of coercion
- Trauma treatment is different: specific techniques to treat manifestations of trauma (works best in a trauma-informed setting)



Those working with survivors “have a tendency to deal with their frustration by retaliating in ways that often uncannily repeat the earlier trauma.”

- Basel van der Kolk, 2003

What Does Help Look Like?

Not Trauma-Informed

- Needs are defined by staff
- Safety is defined as risk management
- The helper decides what help looks like
- Relationships based on problem-solving and accessing resources
- Help is top-down and authoritarian

Trauma-Informed

- Needs are identified by survivor
- Safety defined by each survivor
- Survivors choose the help they want
- Relationships are based on autonomy and connection
- Help is collaborative and responsive

Next webinar in the TIPS series

Session 3: September 23, 2014

Applying Trauma-Informed Practices to Peer Support