The SAMHSA National GAINS Center

“Peer Support, Returning Service Members and Veterans: Veteran Centers and Beyond”

NET/TELECONFERENCE
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2010
3:00-5:00 PM, EASTERN TIME

PRESENTERS:
MOE ARMSTRONG
DAN O’BRIEN-MAZZA, M.S.
LAURIE HARKNESS, PH.D.
DEBORAH DELMAN
Overview of SAMHSA JDTR Projects

- 13 states
- Local pilot sites
- Various approaches to jail diversion and trauma informed care
- Veterans part of state and local committees
- Peers involved along a continuum of activities
- Peer operated organizations provide services and support
- Emerging VA Roles as Stakeholder/Partner
Overview of Webinar

- History of Veteran Peer Support Movement
- Veterans Administration Peer Support Initiatives
- Opportunities for peer staff in the VA and in the community
- Innovative Collaborations
- Family Support Initiatives
Vet To Vet
Veteran Peer Support

Moe Armstrong
Veteran Advocate
vet2vetusa.org
Vet To Vet
Started Almost 25 years ago

- Started Vet to Vet at the College of Santa Fe
  - I didn’t originally call it Vet To Vet
  - This peer support was a Each One, Reach One, Teach One model
  - Most of the veterans I worked with had some sort of psychiatric condition
  - We all worked towards the same goals:
    - Sane, Stable, Safe and Sober
    - To complete school
    - And we succeeded
My Work Was Recognized

COMING HOME BY DEGREES

Moe Armstrong killed Viet Cong
Now he helps vets get an education
Howie taught me how to be more effective and more structured in my peer support work.
In 1993, I started Peer Support for “Vinfen” a mental health agency in Boston.

In 1997, I founded a Peer Educators Project with Naomi Pinson:
- This project provided peer support all across Massachusetts and in the state hospitals.
- It was featured on a TV special with Ted Koppel and Nightline.

In 2002, I started Vet to Vet with Errera Community Care Center:
- Vet to Vet is across the United States in over thirty sites.
- Three research papers are published on effectiveness of Vet to Vet.
- Vet to Vet is more than just a program, it is a way to share ideas, information and support through ongoing education.
- Gladly Teach, Gladly Learn.
Vet to Vet Continues
So Do I

- All of our materials are at no cost
- vet2vetusa.org
- We want the money to go to veterans
- My number is 203-623-0731
My Next Steps

- To continue to work with Veterans at the Errera Community Care Center
- To continue to provide support through ongoing education and recognized materials
- To learn and teach shared decision
- And to stay close to other veterans, always
Three Things to Always Remember

- Always remember how and where I came from
- Stay close to my second office
- Continue On
VA Peer Support Services

Dan O’Brien-Mazza, M.S.
National Director, Peer Support Services
Department of Veterans Affairs,
Office of Mental Health
Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Services
Why Peer Support in VA?

• President’s New Freedom Commission July 2003

• VHA Handbook 1160.01: Uniform Mental Health Services In VA Medical Centers And Clinics (September 11, 2008)

• Research:

Peer Support Among Individuals with Severe Mental Illness: A Review of the Evidence, (Larry Davidson et al. 2005)

Toward the Implementation of Mental Health Consumer Provider Services, (Matthew Chinman et al., 2006)

Early Experiences of Employing Consumer-Providers in the VA (Matthew Chinman et al. 2008, Psychiatric Services, 59, 1315-1321)

Best Practice Guidelines for Consumer-Delivered Services, (Mark Salzer, 2002)
Peer Support and Recovery

Recovery is a house built with Peer Support as The Cornerstone
HOPE

“Hope is at least as important as medication.”

Joseph M. Palumbo, MD, franchise medical leader, psychiatry, Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research and Development, LLC, Titusville, New Jersey in web article about Mindstorm, a visual and auditory experience that relates to viewers what it is like to have schizophrenia.

(http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=73245&lstid=275)
Employment & Volunteer Roles for Peers

What do Peer Support Staff do in VA?

- **Role model** sharing personal recovery stories, showing that recovery from mental illness is possible.
- **Teach** goal setting, problem solving, symptom management skills and a variety of recovery tools.
- **Empower** by helping others identify their strengths, supports, resources and skills.
- **Advocate** by working to eliminate the stigma of mental illness.
- **Act as community liaisons** by identifying social supports in the community and encouraging the expansion of local community resources.
Commitment to Trained and Certified Staff

• VA values peer support certification. Peer support is **not** just Vets offering support to other Vets.

• If not already certified upon hiring, peer support staff must demonstrate competency in the principles of peer support by the end of their first year of employment.

• A VA Peer Support Training Manual is being developed and will be released early 2011, which provides training on the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to be competent in the provision of peer support (34 competencies based on 10 domains of knowledge).

• Volunteers are also required to demonstrate the same competencies.

• New Job Classification being developed for peer specialists based on PL 110-387 Sec 405.
## Survey of Staffing Conducted in April ‘08 and April ’10

### Peer Support Technician Positions and Volunteers/WOCs

~ 100 VA Medical Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>FTEE 2008</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRRC &amp; DTC</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential, Dom Programs (Includes MHRRTP, CWT-TR and SARTPs)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHICM</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless (Includes 6 PHLAG Programs)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outpatient Mental Health</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Use Disorder</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWT</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inpatient Psychiatry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>127.05</strong></td>
<td><strong>237</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*According to an informal survey conducted by Dr. Kathy Dohoney in 2009, there were approximately 40 VAs with about 90 reported volunteer peer support staff. About 39 VAs also had Vet-to-Vet groups.*
Commitment To Promotion Of Holistic Health And Wellness In Peer Support Services

• As role models, peers exhibit their own wellness and striving for holistic health.

• As knowledgeable experts about their own recovery, peers can lend experience to other areas of recovery in mental health or integrated primary care.

• Peers can inspire other MH staff, veterans, and non-MH staff to seek recovery in different areas of wellness (e.g., physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually).
The Future of Peer Support in VA

- VACO will continue to support the implementation of the Uniform Mental Health Services Handbook to hire peer support staff.

- Training and Competency Assessment

- Development of Policy & Procedural Handbook

- Liaison/logistical cooperation between VA services to facilitate smooth integration of peer specialists as full members of MH treatment teams (Charting, Recording Encounters etc.)

- Presence in Int Primary Care/PCMH, Smoking Cess. Diabetes Management, MOVE and others
Contact Info

Dan O’Brien-Mazza, M.S.
National Director, Peer Support Services
Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Mental Health Services
Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Services

daniel.obrien-mazza@va.gov

Phone: (315) 425-4407
VA Connecticut Healthcare Systems’
Errera Community Care Center

Our Community of Hope and Recovery
“The Grand Room”
“The things we have in common bind us in a profound way”
Our Array of Services

- Mobile Crisis Intervention & Day Program-PRRC
- Consumer Empowerment & Choice
- Consumer Driven Rehabilitation Plans
- Short & Long Term Case Management (including MHICM, MHICM RANGE & CTI)
- Housing & Related Community Supports
- Vocational Rehabilitation & Placement (CWT/SE/TWE)
- Homeless Outreach Collaboration, Case Management & Advocacy
- Integrated Treatment & Rehabilitation
Outcomes

- Vocational: Placed 300 Veterans in employment, 1/3 with SMI
- Homeless: 650+ unique Veterans served
- 15 Different VA Grant and Per Diem sites
- 158 transitional beds purchased/per night
- Increased linkages with primary care and mental health services
Outcomes

Permanent Housing:

- Between 2008 and 2012, 550 homeless veterans moved or will move into HUD VA supported housing – with case management
- Over 100 Homeless Veterans and families moved into non-VA permanent housing – Jewitt City
Outcomes

- Exemplary Citation CARF and JCAHO
- National Mentor Monitors, MHICM and Supported Employment
- Above national standards for Fidelity Measures
- 21 Peer Support Technicians
Our Community Philosophy

“Tell me and I will forget. Show me and I will remember. Involve me and I will understand.”
Focus on: PSTs in Hospital Settings
Community Partnerships

Harkness House, New Haven, CT
Permanent Supportive Housing - 18 Units

Legion Woods, New Haven, CT
Permanent Supportive Housing - 20 Units

Jewett City Project, Jewett City, CT
Permanent Supportive Housing - 18 Units

The Eleanor and Franklin
Formerly Park City--Bridgeport, CT
Transitional—14 Beds

Kossuth Street—New Haven, CT

Yale School of Architecture
Homeownership

Permanent Supportive Housing
55 Elderly & 49 Homeless Mentally Ill
“We were all great soldiers once. Some of us just got lost. Our job is to find them and bring them home.”
Statewide Consumer Networks

The Transformation Center Massachusetts
Deborah Delman, Executive Coordinator
www.transformation-center.org
Peer to peer support & advocacy began as people with mental health conditions became active, unashamed voices in society.

Networks exist in most states and territories.

Some are funded by state or territory, some are funded by SAMHSA.

35 states at [www.ncmhr.org/members.htm](http://www.ncmhr.org/members.htm)

27 funded this year by SAMHSA.
Opportunities

- Peer support networks, communities & conferences
- Education & training for peer support facilitation, advocacy, health and wellness
- Training for Peer Specialist Certification and paid peer support roles
- Leadership opportunities
Accessible Peer Support & Lessons Learned

- The prevalence and impact of trauma on mental health conditions and mental health recovery unifies peer support communities
- Don’t miss the prevalence and impact of literacy on health and well-being
- “Inclusion Now” involves support for cultural affinity groups and learning how to be allies
The positive effects of seeing people similar to oneself successfully perform specific activities are proportionate to the degree of similarity between the person performing the activities and the observer.

Contact Information

Moe Armstrong  
Veteran Advocate, Vet to Vet  
203-623-0731

Dan O’Brien-Mazza, M.S.  
National Director, Peer Support Services  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
daniel.obrien-mazza@va.gov  
Phone: (315) 425-4407

Laurie Harkness, Ph.D.  
Founder and Director  
VA Connecticut Healthcare System’s Errera Community Care Center (ECCC)  
Laurie.Harkness@va.gov

Deborah Delman  
Executive Coordinator  
Massachusetts Transformation Center  
deborahd@transformation-center.org

The SAMHSA National GAINS Center  
www.gainscenter.samhsa.gov