

Recovery to Practice Monthly Report

August 2012

National Association of Peer Specialists

The NAPS RTP team has accomplished important steps in curriculum development, creating an awareness of the curriculum and RTP project, and planning for future pilot testing. Because of the slight tardiness of this report and significant development during the first ten days of September, some September developments will be included.

Curriculum Development

The development of the recovery curriculum continued through continuing input from stakeholders and interested parties. This input has been incorporated into the content and format of the modules. Modifications (described below) to the curriculum were made to accommodate conference presentations.

Awareness

The primary focus of our awareness efforts was the 6th Annual National Peer Specialist Conference, Sept. 6-8, in Philadelphia. Although that conference occurred in September, substantial pre-conference work was required in order to accurately and sufficiently provide overviews of each of the eight modules in a 75-minute time frame.

Rita Cronise, instructional design consultant for the NAPS RTP team, created modified formats that included PowerPoint slides and handouts. There were approximately 275 participants at the conference but the RTP overview sessions could accommodate only 32. This limited number was selected to encourage participation and feedback. Each of the sessions was full and conference evaluations contained several complaints that seating was limited. It was noted in the conference program, however, that space was limited and attendance was on a “first-come, first-served” basis.

About 12 persons participated in all eight sessions. Some commented they did not attend all sessions as they wished to open space for others to sample the modules. The sessions included an overview of the entire RTP project in addition to the NAPS portion.

Wilma Townsend, Director of Consumer Affairs for SAMHSA and RTP project manager, spoke during a plenary session about the RTP project and its importance not only to peer specialists and NAPS, but for the overall effort to advance recovery knowledge and practices.

During an evening session at the conference, approximately 20 participants viewed the video, *Open Spaces*. Participants were informed that this video will be included as part of the RTP

recovery module. They were asked if they felt showing this video would be appropriate, informative and relevant for this purpose. All in attendance agreed it would be a valuable way to convey recovery principles and approaches and endorsed its inclusion in the curriculum. Note that arrangements have been made to upload *Open Spaces* in its entirety (40 minutes) on YouTube to facilitate access. A free YouTube downloading program is available so anyone with Internet access can download and save this production. It is also available for purchase (for a nominal fee) from a peer owned/operated micro-enterprise.

During the conference, a professional videographer taped dozens of short interviews that addressed personal definitions of recovery. These interview subjects included Joseph Rogers, Gina Calhoun, Scott Heller, Sue Bergeson and many others. The interviews were strikingly personal and revealing. It is hoped that at least portions of this footage will be available for the RTP project as a valuable resource for all professions.

As part of our awareness/input gathering efforts, the NAPS RTP team has made arrangements to perform a workshop at the Alternatives 2012 conference in Portland, OR in October. This annual gathering of peers usually attracts about 1,000 participants, many of whom are peer specialists.

Pilot Planning

Three pilots have been scheduled for the recovery curriculum. The sites and dates for the pilots are: Cincinnati (Recovery Center of Hamilton County), Nov. 5-9; New York City (Howie the Harp and two collaborating organizations), Nov. 26-30; and Hawaii (Hawaii Dept. of Mental Health and Substance Abuse), Dec. 3-7.

We continue to be impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of the sponsoring organizations as well as the quality of local facilitators who will be participating with the goal of presenting the full RTP curriculum once finalized. In addition, Patrick Hayes, a regional recovery coordinator from Illinois, has made a commitment to attend at least one pilot training with the intent of bringing the training to all of Illinois. A conversation with Hayes' supervisor revealed strong support for this endeavor.

National Practice Standards/Certification

During the peer specialist conference, the issue of developing well-defined peer specialist values, competencies, practice standards and, eventually, certification, was much discussed. Several sessions were conducted with those interested and conversation about this permeated the entire conference.

During her plenary session address, Wilma Townsend explained the value of the RTP project to the peer specialist profession and saw the development of national standards as an integral part of the project. There is a sense of urgency to the development of national standards at this time as it is being discussed by state officials and others in very serious terms.

Discussions were held with Wilma, Peter Ashenden, Allen Daniels and Steve Harrington regarding the Pillars of Peer Support meeting in Atlanta, Sept. 24 & 25. Private conversations were also held that included Dan O'Brien-Mazza, National Director of Peer Support for the U.S.

Dept. of Veteran Affairs (DVA). All appear to strongly support this endeavor and work in this area already performed by the DVA may be used as a foundation.

A task force of peer leaders has been formed to advance this initiative and a draft of values, competencies and standards will be created for distribution at the Pillars of Peer Support meeting. Because of state officials' interest in complying with Medicare/Medicare requirements, their input will be sought and considered by the NAPS RTP team.