

Recovery to Practice Monthly Report

July 2012

National Association of Peer Specialists

The NAPS RTP team has focused its efforts on four areas: 1) establishing three curriculum pilot sites, 2) organizing an RTP module introduction track at the 6th Annual National Peer Specialist Conference in Philadelphia, 3) launching new website, and 4) refining the curriculum.

Pilot Sites

Seventeen complete pilot applications were received and the team of Rita Cronise, Lisa Goodale and Steve Harrington selected three sites: 1) New York, Howie the Harp; 2) Cincinnati, Recovery Center of Hamilton County and 3) Hawaii, State Department of Mental Health. The selection process involved a review of all applications by each team member. E-mails were exchanged expressing views on the most promising sites followed by conference calls. The criteria included: capacity to accommodate the training as a true pilot (week-long or similar format), cultural diversity, age diversity, veteran participation, geographic diversity, access to potential future trainers for the curriculum for mentoring, and brief description of reason for wanting the training pilot.

Based on these criteria, the selection team quickly came to agreement on the three sites but continued to evaluate all applications to ensure the team had made the best decisions. After site selection, the unsuccessful applicants were notified. The successful applicants were notified and conversations initiated to move implementation forward.

New York Site: This site was selected not only because of the high marks received on the criteria mentioned previously, but also because of Howie the Harp's willingness to include two other, relatively close organizations as partners. Howie the Harp had rather limited scheduling options, however, but discussions led to the scheduling of the pilot on Nov. 14-16 and 26-30. The pilot will be conducted in five-hour blocks.

Cincinnati: In addition to scoring high on the selection criteria, the Recovery Center staff and associates were extremely enthusiastic. This group includes many very experienced peer specialists and people with backgrounds that would make them superior trainers. This pilot training has been set for Nov. 5-9.

Hawaii: While this organization (the state) scored high on all criteria, the brief description of its reasoning for site selection was compelling. Subsequent conversations with a state official created a better understanding as well. That official noted that, because Hawaii is known by "mainlanders" as a beautiful tourist destination, there is a very different reality than most know. Substance abuse and mental health issues are at least as common as in other states and although

the state has 145 certified peer specialists, bringing training to this workforce is a difficult task. Travel expenses are a formidable barrier. Although firm dates have yet to be confirmed, it appears that Dec. 3-7 will work best.

Although subject to change and not all NAPS RTP core team members will participate in all pilots, those participating will include: Steve Harrington, Rita Cronise, Lisa Goodale, Antonio Lambert, and Lyn Legere.

Although not a “core” RTP team member, Patrick Hayes, a recovery coordinator working for the state of Illinois, has been involved in reviewing curriculum modules and offering suggestions. Patrick is recognized as an emerging leader in the peer support and recovery movements and has demonstrated superior speaking and training skills. He has committed to attending at least one pilot with the intent of facilitating the implementation of the RTP curriculum in Illinois when timing is appropriate (i.e. the curriculum is finalized). Expenses related to his involvement will not be drawn from the NAPS RTP project and his desire for involvement demonstrates a strong passion and respect for the curriculum.

Three separate organizations in the Los Angeles area (one did not apply for the pilot) strongly expressed interest in continued involvement with the RTP project. As a result, NAPS is seriously considering Anaheim as a site for its 7th Annual National Peer Specialist Conference and hopes to use that as an opportunity to bring these three organizations together for further RTP involvement.

NAPS Conference RTP Track

Rita has been very busy organizing an RTP track for the national peer specialist conference to be held in Philadelphia, Sept. 6-8, 2012. Using six 75-minute sessions, core team members will be presenting “introductions” to the eight modules. These sessions will describe content and activities and are expected to involve participants in some of these activities that are part of the curriculum. These sessions will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis with seating for 30. Although a variety of curriculum development benefits are expected to result, a primary benefit will be the opportunity for participants to offer early input.

New Website Launch

Working with DBSA and DSG, NAPS’ new website was launched with links and new descriptions of the RTP project. This was timely as many people are now using the website to obtain information about this year’s national conference. We are receiving very favorable reports about the appearance and content of the website and those drawn to the website say it is very “user friendly.” Those who are visiting the website for conference information report accessing RTP pages for information on the project. This was our hope, which appears to be realized.

Curriculum Refinement

Curriculum Refinement is an ongoing process as input is being incorporated almost continuously. Part of this refinement involves strategizing ways to handle logistical barriers to

implementation after the curriculum is finalized and distributed. Logistical and other barriers regarding quality control through “authorization” of trainers are also being considered. Strategies for creating a cadre of such trainers are emerging and the most exciting and practical strategies are being drawn from the experiences and models used by other organizations for similar endeavors.

In August, the NAPS RTP team will be continuing to refine the curriculum by incorporating input, complete organization of the RTP track at the national peer specialist conference, finalizing pilot site plans and handling logistics and exploring new implementation strategies.

One item of note is the fact that the RTP project appears to have acted as a unifying force within the profession. Our stakeholders and partners are expressing a need for this project to continue well beyond the remainder of the contract period to ensure the development, distribution and implementation of quality training.

The project also appears to have sparked additional interest in a national credential or certification for peer specialists. A surprising number of stakeholders and partners are still reviewing the NAPS situational analysis. Calls are coming for more definitive value statements and practice standards. As a result, a special session at the national peer specialist conference will be held to address these issues.

For your information, Gladys Christian has decided to retire as president of NAPS. Her decision was largely based on failing eyesight. This means she will unlikely be able to continue to review and provide input on RTP curriculum modules. We will miss her involvement as, she says, “learns a new lifestyle,” but we certainly understand and respect this most difficult decision as her heart remains with peer support.