

Recovery to Practice Monthly Report

June 2014

International Association of Peer Supporters

In June, the iNAPS RTP team followed up on the topic of self-care, which was identified as an area of keen interest at several in-person RTP meetings. The follow up included an article on stress in the June iNAPS newsletter and a webinar on the topic on June 20.

Taking a cue from another RTP discipline and a recommendation by RTP Deputy Director Deidra Dain, the webinar was presented in an interactive manner. Steve Harrington introduced the topic and provided some background on the mental and physical effects of stress. Questions were posed to Peter Ashenden of Optum, the meeting host, Steve Nawotniak, an occupational therapist and psychologist Kathy Roaleen. He then directed those questions to webinar participants who responded in the chat function of the webinar service. The results were startling as participants eagerly provided input.

The input provided by participants was so powerful, Steve agreed to create an article in the next iNAPS newsletter to share participants' contributions. In addition to the contributions, several participants used the chat function to thank the webinar organizers for an opportunity to "have a voice." This webinar presentation method was so meaningful and appreciated, the iNAPS RTP expects to use it for future webinars.

Although there will be no webinar in July, Optum is committed to continue its support through use of its webinar technology and two webinars are expected to be offered in August. Because of Optum's continued support, these webinars are offered at no cost and are known to be used in several states and the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs as continuing education units.

To receive a certificate of participation, participants must access a short quiz from the iNAPS website and complete it. Individual certificates are mailed to participants who take the quiz. Although a significant number of participants do not wish to receive a certificate of participation, iNAPS send out 75-125 certificates after each webinar. Some participants have expressed their appreciation for quality certificates they can proudly display in their offices.

Also, the iNAPS RTP team has discovered that it has significantly underestimated the number of participants. It is clear that, because multiple participants are often using a single computer and call-in, the total number of participants for each webinar must regularly exceed 200.

Future webinars will continue to expand on the RTP topic areas identified during the iNAPS RTP situational analysis.

There will be no "Champions of Peer Support" feature in the next iNAPS newsletter. This feature is intended to recognize individuals outside the peer support profession who have made

significant contributions to peer support and is a direct result of the RTP efforts to foster interdisciplinary collaborations and understanding. Unfortunately, two individuals we hoped to feature were unable to meet the June newsletter deadline. Instead, they will be featured in future issues. The two are representatives from the fields of psychiatry and occupational therapy.

The iNAPS RTP team continues to work with the Hogg Foundation of Austin, TX. The team expects to attend the annual recovery conference sponsored by that foundation and also offer at least one RTP training in Texas within the next nine months.

The iNAPS RTP team also continues to receive inquiries for RTP trainings. The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA), a project partner with iNAPS, is handling the complicated logistics of offering RTP trainings. DBSA is also working with other members of the RTP team to offer an RTP training in conjunction with the 8th Annual National Peer Support Conference in October in Atlanta, GA. An RTP training will be completed for some Ohio peer supporters in August.

The team was approached by an author of a very successful recovery workbook about using RTP materials to create a separate recovery workbook specifically for persons with a bipolar condition. Of course, full permission was granted (we recognize that RTP materials are public domain) and the author said he was particularly impressed with the content and curriculum delivery method (collaborative learning).

iNAPS has also been contacted by peer support certification officials about using RTP materials for upgrading their peer support trainings. Those officials are from Wisconsin, North Carolina and Ohio.

The RTP project, as implemented by iNAPS, continues to demonstrate a great need and desire for additional training for peer supporters. The project continues to result in collaborations with other disciplines and organizations and, through these collaborations, the team expects a greater understanding of peer support, its value and role in a variety of work settings.