

Recovery to Practice Monthly Report

March 2013

National Association of Peer Specialists

In March, the NAPS' RTP team performed a recovery curriculum pilot in New York City in collaboration with Community Access. There were 18 participants who completed the pilot training in a week-long setting.

The pilot resulted in the following findings:

- The content appears to be valuable for participants (working peer specialists) and addresses topics important to improve the profession's practice.
- The delivery method, which is highly interactive, is both skill building and increases knowledge.
- The use of highly interactive methods allows facilitators and participants to monitor the "energy" of the group and respond effectively when that energy may wane.
- The use of interaction and activities builds a strong bond among participants quickly.

The following lessons were learned:

- Facilitators must be selected carefully and trained comprehensively in the delivery method.
- Certain personality qualities of facilitators engage participants and foster cooperation among everyone.
- Preparation for the training can be underestimated and attention must be given to the time required to assemble training materials (handouts, of which there are 95).
- The size and layout of the training room must be able to accommodate a circle of participants sitting in chairs without tables.
- Facilitators must consider the time required for participants to move before and after activities, i.e. moving room to room for breakouts.
- Distractions, including prep talk by facilitators, must be minimized through careful planning and awareness.
- Team building among facilitators is vital.
- Participants can effectively assume some leadership aspects of the training.

As a result of the NYC pilot, relatively few changes will be required in the content and delivery of the recovery curriculum although comments are still being received from participants.

There is an issue concerning the time frame in which curriculum is delivered. Although the delivery is highly interactive, the content is deep and requires time for individual processing. At the end of each day, the group runs the risk of low energy, especially when presented in five consecutive days.

To more effectively deliver the curriculum, the NAPS RTP team is investigating two different formats: 1) multi-week, four-hour sessions, one or two days a week, and 2) two weekend retreats. A pilot in the Rochester, New York area testing the first format is being explored. A pilot using the second format has been scheduled for Grand Rapids, Michigan on the weekends of June 8-9 and 22-23.

The retreats will be offered to a relatively small number (12 maximum participants) at the home of one RTP member. The site is in the country and on a lake in a serene environment. It is expected that some

participants will wish to stay overnight and enjoy fishing, canoeing and walking in a forest during non-training periods. The site was selected based on 1) cost (there will be no cost for participants), 2) ability to provide food service, 3) comfortable setting, and 4) space and proximity to the city (the site is in the country but only a 20-minute drive from the city).

In addition, the RTP team is exploring the potential for another week-long pilot in the Los Angeles, California area. The pilot planned for Hawaii has been cancelled due to logistical issues.

The NAPS RTP has begun planning a facilitator training to be conducted in conjunction with the annual national peer specialist conference in Anaheim, California, Aug. 27-28.

OptumHealth has generously offered technology assistance to provide a series of free webinars based on the RTP curriculum. Content and delivery will be the sole responsibility of the NAPS RTP team and will involve a variety of presenters drawn from team members who were the primary authors or consultants for the modules.

The first webinar is scheduled for noon to 1 p.m. on April 23 with Steve Harrington presenting recovery basics for peer supporters. This opportunity will allow the NAPS RTP to deliver the curriculum in a different format and, hopefully, reach a large number of peer supporters across the U.S. The challenge will be to deliver skill-building in this format. The NAPS RTP team has begun promoting the webinar series and the technology has been tested to ensure smooth delivery and operation. Participants will have the option of registering prior to the webinar in order to receive a certificate of completion. Because each state has its own requirements for continuing education credits, participants will be responsible to apply for such credits themselves.

In April, the RTP team will be preparing for the first webinar and determining whether (and then planning if feasible) pilots will be offered in California and New York. Modifications resulting from lessons learned from the NYC pilot will be made in the curriculum. Basic planning for the facilitator training in August will begin. Communication with participants from the Cincinnati and NYC pilots will be ongoing to inform them of changes and obtain additional suggestions for improvement.