

Recovery to Practice Monthly Report

November 2012

National Association of Peer Specialists

The NAPS RTP team conducted a pilot of the recovery curriculum, planned (but did not implement) a pilot in New York City, and refined the content, expression and delivery format of the curriculum. The team was also very involved in the development of national practice standards for recovery coaches and peer specialists.

November 5-9 were the dates of the RTP recovery curriculum pilot in Cincinnati. There were 20 participants, virtually all of whom attended the entire course. The course was hosted by the Recovery Center of Hamilton County, which provided space, lunches and refreshments. The Recovery Center was a most hospitable host and tended to all of the team's needs.

The course participants were working peer specialists. In addition to these 20 participants, Patrick Hayes, a recovery support coordinator for the state of Illinois, attended and acted as a facilitator. Other facilitators for the course included two people from the Recovery Center, Hayes, Lisa Goodale of the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, Renee Kopache, Rita Cronise and Steve Harrington.

Debriefing occurred during the course with participants and daily during evenings after sessions with facilitators. During delivery of the curriculum and through debriefings, the following was learned:

- The curriculum, as written, was too structured and did not allow for sufficient “imprinting” by facilitators.
- Participants completed the pre-session “homework” and found it helpful. Participants took the homework very seriously, which led to a “fast start” for the course and stimulating conversation.
- The issue of self care was weaved throughout the course and appeared to be an important aspect.
- The showing of “optional” videos during lunch offered both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages included meaningful conversation. The disadvantages included the inability to sufficiently network with other participants.
- The pace of the was, at times, too fast for participants given the time frame.
- The best time frame for the curriculum would be weekly sessions that would allow participants time for additional preparation and processing of material presented.
- A workbook for participants would be helpful.
- Experienced facilitators could readily use the curriculum without much prior preparation.
- More participation and less didactic presentation would be appropriate.

A second pilot in the New York City area was planned for Nov. 26-30 but those plans were complicated by illness of some facilitators, logistics and the effects of hurricane Sandy. Although most materials and the NAPS RTP team were prepared for the pilot and the New York hosts were also prepared. However, the logistical issues primarily presented by the hurricane made it impractical to perform the pilot at the scheduled time. The training was postponed until after the first of the year.

The NAPS RTP team is exploring the use of the Recovery Academy in Grand Rapids, Mich. as a potential teaching laboratory. The use of a delivery method focusing on participation through group discussions is also being explored. A demonstration of this technique was performed for a group in Columbus, Ohio as part of an unrelated project. The results of that demonstration appeared highly successful and elements will likely be incorporated in the final recovery curriculum facilitator guidelines.

In regard to implementation, the state of Ohio was awarded a small BRSS TACS grant to revamp the state's peer specialist/recovery coach training and certification program. That project involves a NAPS RTP team member and three individuals on the advisory committee attended the pilot training. As a result, key people were extremely familiar with the RTP recovery curriculum and portions of the curriculum will be integrated into the new Ohio peer specialist/recovery coach curriculum.

The development of national practice standards for peer support has consumed considerable time and effort for the NAPS RTP team. Despite numerous conference calls, meetings, e-mails, document development and consultations, the project remains one of great significance for the peer support profession. The NAPS RTP team sees the development of national practice standards as a means of bringing the addictions and mental health fields together in many ways.

The team has been heavily involved in the development of the agenda for a Dec. 14 meeting at SAMHSA headquarters to develop collaborative relationships around the practice standards project.

Next month, the NAPS RTP team will be involved in the Dec. 14 meeting implementation. The team will also work on refining the recovery curriculum and strategizing ways to pilot portions of that curriculum. The team will also work with the New York stakeholders to offer a pilot in that city.