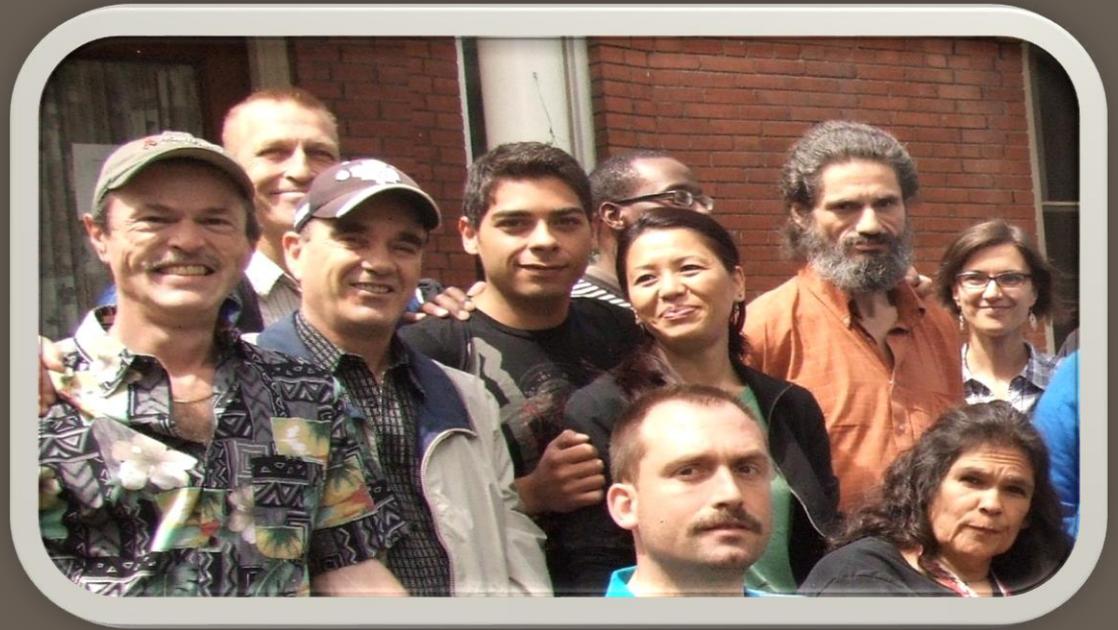


PEER SUPPORT WORK WORKS: THE SUCCESS OF A PEER LED PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY GROUP



LOFT

HSJCC Conference 2013

Introductions and Outline of the presentation

- To outline the role of a peer support worker in an organization
- Discuss how to set up and support a peer support program
- To share information about the Pathways to Recovery model
- To let the group experience a group
- Review outcome data
- Group discussion

What is LOFT?

- LOFT Community Services is a large multiservice community mental health and addictions service organization providing supportive housing, supported housing, five community case management teams, a mobile behavioral supports program (Central LHIN) and homeless outreach services;
- LOFT serves over 4,000 Youth, Adults and Seniors each year who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, and who have serious and complex mental health and addiction challenges;
- Many of these individuals also have significant physical health challenges.

What is meant by a ‘peer support worker’?

- A peer worker leverages their lived experience and professional training to support people living with Mental health and/or addiction challenges
- A peer support worker is a person who has achieved functional recovery with a mental health issue and continues to receive mental health services and are employed by a program.

Why peer support?

- Mental health Commission (2010): “Mammoth potential”
- “Peer participation is recognized at national, provincial and local levels as a key component to a recovery-oriented model of care”(Campbell, 2005)
- Two randomized, controlled studies found that peers serving in health services resulted in increased service engagement, level of social participation, and quality of life among consumers served (Craig, Doherty, Jamieson-Craig, Boocock and Attafua, 2004)
- Cook et al (2012): An 8 week, peer led educational training program on MH self- management reduced consumers’ level of depression and anxiety in compared to a control group
- Pickett et al (2012): not only improved outcomes but sustained them past 6 months

Peer support worker roles and responsibilities

- Job description
- Clear work plan
- At our agency: Pathways to Recovery groups at 3 locations and across programs, house meetings, some 1:1 support, drama group
- Role in the staff team

Group Discussion



- What peer initiatives are you involved with directly right now?

Basic Elements of Pathways to Recovery

- Best run by people with lived experience (Facilitator training course available)
- Self- directed way of using lived experiences to achieve recovery
- To provide a supportive culture for people to explore their own recovery in a self- directed and self- controlled way
- Mutual support and building relationships that support and sustain recovery

The workbook

1. Explore recovering wellness: physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually
2. Mental health recovery education: Hope, crisis, self- advocacy, support
3. Uncover and explore personal strengths and resilience
4. Learn to create vision and set short and long term goals
5. Provide an opportunity for peer support: give and get

The workbook

- Focuses on personal strengths and dreams and refocus on reclaiming positive sources of identify and a life beyond Mental health/ addiction challenges.
- Help think and plan for a full life
- Uses the metaphor of a journey
- Cultural strengths, dreams across several domains of life, and set goals
- Self- stigma and impact of discrimination are addressed
- Full or short self- assessments and personal accounts of recovery
- Self- help strategies outlined

Research supporting Pathways to Recovery

- Strengths approach was the subject of more than 10 formal research studies. It is considered an evidence-based practice producing positive outcomes.
- Significant improvements in all domains with Pathways to Recovery Groups (Green, 2010)
- WRAP group: 12 week program (similar elements and peer led) recently validated and found to be evidence based (Floyd & Ringer, 2010; Cook et al 2009)

Testimonials of LOFT participants in Pathways to Recovery

- *“It has made me more hopeful”*
- *“It gave me the knowledge and understanding to cope”*
- *“Pathways made me see that we alone are capable and responsible for making our life journey pleasant. Even if it ends up in Hell, all the more reason to make our life meaningful. Pathways can make us feel less stressed about our regrets.”*

Group work— Chapter 7: My Current Circle of Social Support

- Introduction/ description of Chapter 7: Travel companions: Social Support for the Journey
- Participants fill out worksheet
- Facilitated discussion: Popcorn style
- Probing questions by facilitator
- Role of peers in the group is to support and listen
- Wrap up by facilitator: why is a circle of social support important?

How do you support facilitators?

- Workplan is important (co-created)
- Regular supervision where expression of personal needs of peer support worker is encouraged
- Debriefing template co-created by facilitator and supervisor that is followed for any group at any site.

What has made it successful/ lessons learned?

- Small group size (5- 8 people)
- Notifying people through house meetings
- Meeting sites are easy to get to (their housing or close by)
- Keeping the groups open instead of closed. People feel they are always welcome.
- Must be flexible: Each group has a different flavour (ex. MHJ group talks a lot about addictions; Pathways has become supplementary or the back bone and the focus is on addictions recovery)
- Fostering relationships with peer leaders within the groups (one member brought snacks): Possible future facilitators.
- Re-iterate the safety of the group (confidentiality and respectful communication). Use the mid- group break and end of group for connecting with participants
- Access peer network in the City of Toronto for support and ideas: Meet every couple of months

Evaluation/outcomes

- Pathways pre and post evaluation tool
- The tool looks at: Connections to supports, MH education, hopefulness, personal strengths
- Some findings:
 - ▣ Participants are feeling more happy and positive
 - ▣ Participants are feeling motivated
 - ▣ Participants are feeling strong and confident

Thank-you!

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LOFT is able to provide consultation and training workshops.