

Certified PEER Specialist News Letter

Certified PEER Specialist First News Letter

Certified Peer Specialists (CPS) are people recovering from a serious mental illness (SMI), that have been trained to help other peers to recover too, by sharing hope and our lived experience. CPS have a support group, Professional Development and Networking meeting, which meets every third Monday (see details back page.) CPS are circulating this newsletter quarterly as a way to share information with the community and educate people about the role of CPS, who we are and what we do.



Caption describing picture or graphic.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Success Story	2
PEER Pioneer	2
County Update	2
Job Listing	2
Up coming trainings	3
Mentoring Opportunity	3
Dear Vera	3
Mission Statement and Recovery Values	4

CPS Professional Development & Networking Groups

Mission Statement

The mission statement of this meeting is to assist each other to grow in our own recovery, grow as peer specialists, and ensure the quality of peer support services through mentoring recovery to our community.

Success Story: by A Program Manager

Every day I come to work and feel the stress of all the administrative duties that need to be accomplished. It is easy to forget the personal nature of this job and become so bogged down by paperwork and management issues. This is exactly what happened to me not so long ago and it opened my eyes wide to the reason why I took this job in the first place and the amazing work that the Certified Peer Specialists are doing in this community

I was going about my routine, which in all senses was becoming mundane, and had another intake scheduled but this time it was different for two reasons. It was the first time we were doing this at Bldg 50/MCES and we were bringing along a new staff in training. It started like any other intake,

I was in a hurry to get through all the forms so I could get back to the pile of work on my desk and get on with my day and my staff was just as rushed trying to get back to the grind of "productivity.

In beginning my usual talk about who we are, what we do, and the forms needing to be signed I was stumped by the participant looking at me and saying "I just don't think I need this now, my life is just fine". I was taken aback. I walked in assuming it would move smoothly like the others had before and that this participant was already versed and willing to participate in our program. I tried everything in my Clinical book of knowledge to try and engage this participant in wanting to be in Trail Guides but was going downhill fast with no brakes.

At this point Steve, one of my most wonderful CPS's stepped in and asked if he could interject a few thoughts. He leaned forward and simply said "Hey man, I have been in these four walls and I know what it feels like to be here.....". That was it, our new hire chimed in with the same sentiments and the participant sat up in his chair, looked at me, and said okay lets get started

Wow, all my skills and knowledge and the work I have done over the years to get me where I am as a professional all came together as I watched the most basic human skills being put to use in an amazing encounter which only goes to show how amazing these relationships can be in just a matter of seconds.

I told this story at a Supervi-

Amazing these relationships can be in just a matter of seconds.

I told this story at supervisors meeting and was amazed at the reaction I received, but it goes further than this. When I returned to my office there was an email from the mother of the new participant as she had just attended a discharge meeting at the hospital with the Psychiatrist, the Treatment Team, her son, and Steve and was amazed at the difference in how staff addressed her son and how Steve addressed her son and the positive reaction he had towards Steve. The email went on to express gratitude to Steve and his mere presence and a hope to better relate to her own child in also learning and growing from Steve's experience.

County Updates

The county has scheduled a 3 day Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) introduction training, on April 6, 7 & 8, 2009 Look out for the flyers! A 5 day WRAP will follow shortly after the 3 day WRAP training

Jessica Reggi, from social security will do a presentation on benefits for Peer Specialist who are working or want to

work. If you are a PEER Specialist and are interested in working, but have fears of losing your benefits come to the March 16 Professional Development meeting ask the questions that will help you to go to work.

The county is also planning a job fair in February, for PEER Specialist. More information will follow.

Peer Pioneer Update

DECEMBER— Diana Cervone, Trail Guides

We would like to send out a congratulations to Diana Cervone CPS. Diana recently graduated from The Pennsylvania Institute for Community Living (PICL) Program on November 21, 2008. Diana entered the PICL Program on May 31, 2005. Diana completed CPS Training in October of 2007.

She is a WRAP Facilitator. Diana was hired by Friends Connection (MONTCO) in Febru-

ary 2008. She has since moved to Trail Guides. Diana has made great strides in her recovery. Her "never say never" attitude has helped others to achieve recovery. She is a great asset to many with whom she comes in contact. Congratulations again to Diana and continued success.

Montgomery County Job Openings for CPS Employment

Trailguides and Friends Connection
Mental Health Association
Attn: Human Resources
1211 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
12th Floor
CPS Positions
1 Full Time
3 part time CPS

Penn Foundation
Attn: Human Resources
807 Lawn Avenue
Box 32
Sellersville, PA 18960
CPS Positions
2 Full Times

Central MH/MR
Fax or email:
Fax #: (610)205-0216
Email: markom@central.org
CPS Positions
1 Full Times

Hedwig House
Attn: Karen Bitting
904 DeKalb Street
Norristown, PA 19401
Fax: (610)279-1498
Email: karenbitting@hedwighouse.org
CPS Position
1 Part Time

Upcoming Orientation Trainings: (FREE)

Context for Recovery -

Philosophy and Practice

Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2009

Time: 9:00 to 12:00

Presenters: Betsy Gorski & Berta Britz

Location: Montgomery Co. Fire Academy

Implementing the Recovery Planning Process

Concepts and Practices

Date: Wednesday, April 1, 2009

Time: 9:00 to 12:00

Presenters: Joan King & Berta Britz

Location: Montgomery Co. Fire Academy

Communication:

How to Use Yourself to promote Recovery

Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2009

Time: 9:00 to 12:00

Presenters: Mark Bourse & TBS:

Location: Montgomery Co. Fire Academy

Resiliency-Oriented Services

Date: Wednesday, March 4, 2009

Time: 9:00 to 12:00

Presenters: Mark Boorse & Maureen Feeny -
Byrnes

Location: Montgomery Co. Fire Academy

Stages of Change and Building Motivation

Date: Wednesday, April 26, 2009

Time: 9:00 to 12:00

Presenters: Stefanie Wakeman & Sable Menik

Location: Montgomery Co. Fire Academy

Action Planning for Prevention and Recovery

Date: Wednesday, June 3, 2009

Time: 9:00 to 12:00

Presenters: Susi Costello & Maureen Feeny-
Byrnes

Location: Montgomery Co. Fire Academy

The helping Relationship: A Recovery Promoting Basic

Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2009

Time: 9:00 to 12:00

Presenters: Mark Boorse & TBS

Location: Montgomery Co. Fire Academy

Dignity and Respect - An interactive Workshop

Date: Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Time: 9:00 to 12:00

Presenters: Consumer Satisfaction Team

Location: Montgomery Co. Fire Academy

Promoting and Using PEER Support

Date: Wednesday, June 17,

Time: 9:00 to 12:00

Presenters: Betsy Gorski & Maureen Feeny-
Byrnes

Location: Montgomery Co. Fire Academy

“Winter 2009 - Mentoring Opportunity Now Offers Stipend ”

For Information Contact: Berta Britz, bbdogfreind@aol.com

This exciting new program will assist certified peer specialists who have not yet found employment in the mental health field. Its purpose is to help refresh and hone the skills developed in the CPS training. We want to help CPS's further develop employment skills and to assist in job searches. Participants would offer valu-

able peer support to a resident of the Coordinated Homeless Outreach Center (the CHOC). The CHOC is located in Building 53 of Norristown State Hospital. It is the primary homeless shelter for Montgomery County.

These activities would increase the person's sense of

wellbeing and connectedness and would facilitate her/his re-entry into the community. In addition to supervision, mentoring support, and TransPass, you would receive a modest stipend each month with a bonus at the end of your internship.

Ethics and Boundaries in a Recovery Environment—Time for a Shift in Thinking

Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2009,

Time: 9:00 to 12:00

Presenters: Betsy Gorski & Berta Britz

Location: Montgomery Co. Fire Academy

For further information

Contact: Peggy Maccolini

Office: (610) 270-3004

Fax (610) 270-9634

Dear Vera



Dear Vera,

I have been supervising J, a peer specialist, for the last year. She has been a terrific addition to our agency. Not only has she supported her peers in reaching their goals but she has helped us all change. Lately I have seen some changes in J's work performance. She is arriving late, taking more time off, is irritable with her co-workers and is not getting her paperwork done. We have talked about these

changes in supervision but I don't know what is going on with J. I did suggest that she contact you for support but I don't think she has. Would you please reach out to her, talked about these changes in supervision but I don't know what is going on with J. I did suggest that she contact you for support but I don't think she has. Would you please reach out to her, maybe you could help her develop a WRAP for work. I am not sure if these changes are early warning signs for J but I am concerned about her. Perhaps

we can set a time for you to come out and meet with J and me.

Chris

Dear Chris,

It is obvious that you care about J. as an employee and a person. You are on track in focusing on her work performance and the changes you see in it. Keeping clear your expectations for her work is really important. I also think your reminding her that I could be a resource to her is great. Perhaps you already have, but don't forget to offer all the other resources your agency offers

to employees who may be having difficulty. Those resources could include an Employee Assistance Program. I will make a special effort to connect with J. at the next professional development meeting. Coming to the Professional Development Meeting may be just what she needs to open up and attending the meeting is an expectation of her job. However, I think the next real move is J's. If she contacts me and shares about her situation, I will certainly offer my support, personal experience and workplace strategies. Since peer support is always voluntary, I will try to find ways to offer my support to J. Thank you for promoting peer support in Montgomery County.

Vera

Montgomery County, PA

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PO BOX 311

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Fax:(610) 278-3683
E-mail: vdobson@montcopa.org

Montgomery County Office of BH and MH Consultants in Context

Mission of Technical Assistance

The mission of peer support technical assistance is to support Certified Peer Specialists, their supervisors, and the mental health system in acquiring the skills and attitudes needed to promote the growth of peer support services. This includes increasing knowledge and skills through education and mentoring. It involves building peer support among CPS and promoting wellness strategies that provide pathways to recovery. Technical assistance also involves collaboration in the identification of system/agency barriers to the delivery of recovery oriented support and partnering in ways to reduce these challenges to the provision of quality peer support.

We Focus on these “ Values of Recovery”

HOPE
INDIVIDUALITY
SELF AWWRNESS
SELF DETERMINATION
MEANINGFUL LIFE
RESPECT
PRRE SUPPORT
COMMUNITY FOCUS
ADVOCACY

Invitation to Professional Development Support And Networking Meeting

Certified Peer Specialist (CPS) in Montgomery County are invited to attend the Professional Development Support and Networking meet. When: every 3rd Monday

Where: Montgomery County, Human service Center
1430 DeKalb Street (room A/B)
Norristown PA

Time: 11:30 to 1:00

Message: To all Certified Peer Specialist

The county office, encourages all Certified PEER Specialists to attend the Professional Development and Networking Meeting for support and encouragement. This is a place to express yourself and share the Hope with other Peer Specialists who might be struggling. Come Share your successes, and challenges . We encourage all PEER Specialists to come to the meeting “working or not”. **All are welcome!**