



**Via Hope Certified Peer Specialist Advisory Committee  
Friday, April 26, 2019**

**Agenda Items**

- I. Agenda Item 1 - Welcome and Introductions
- II. Agenda Item 2 – Review charter, purpose of group
- III. Agenda Item 3- Updates from Via Hope: Current scope of work, upcoming projects, changes due to HB 1486
- IV. Agenda Item 4 – Discussion of Peer Professional Development Institute
- V. Agenda Item 5 – Debrief, plan for next meeting

**Minutes to Follow on Next Page**



**Purpose of Meeting:** In-person quarterly meeting of the Via Hope Peer Specialist Advisory Committee.

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Randie Benno, Larry Diaz, Dorsen “Red” Gilbert, Emmanuel Gonzalez, Stephanie Jack, Meredith Jones, Nikki Prince, Annie Powell, JoAnna Rodgers, Abraham Samaniego

**Committee Members Absent:** None

**Via Hope Staff in attendance:** Dennis Bach, Maisha Barrett, Liz Castaneda, Sandra Smith

### **Welcome and introductions**

Staff convened the first meeting of the re-organized Peer Specialist Advisory Committee. The group took some time to introduce themselves. Maisha Barrett led the group in an activity to create their community guidelines.

### **Review charter, purpose of group**

Liz Castaneda reviewed the Committee charter and provided clarity about the purpose of the group.

### **Updates from Via Hope: Current scope of work, upcoming projects, changes due to HB 1486**

Via Hope staff provided an overview of the organization’s current scope of work and what projects each department is working on, including training, Recovery Institute offerings and peer oriented projects such as Peer Voice and the Peer Run Organizations Project. Sandra Smith provided information on how the passage of HB 1486 and the introduction of the peer support billable service into the Texas Medicaid plan have impacted the work of Via Hope in terms of peer specialist training as well as the change in our role since we are no longer the certifying body for mental health peer specialists.

### **Discussion of Peer Professional Development Institute**

Dennis Bach provided information about the Peer Professional Development Institute (PPDI), a new project that Via Hope is currently developing. The committee will be providing Via Hope with advice and input on the new project. Liz Castaneda led the group in a Liberating Structures activity to support the group in developing ideas and addressing challenges facing the peer specialist workforce. Below are some highlights from the discussion:

What do you think are the biggest challenges facing the peer workforce that you would like the PDDI to address?

- How do we recruit new peers if the pay is so dismal?
- Not just clinical staff but more people recognizing value
- Career ladder
- Staying true to the ideas that we receive in training/staying true to role and scope of work. Not becoming mini case managers



- Even within same organization you could have different people in leadership treat the role differently. Some directors making peers work in reception, etc.
- Quantity versus quality. Requiring unreasonable amounts of hours/productivity requirements. Varies a lot amongst organizations
- Peer support skills can be harder to quantify than clinical skills at times.
- Promote what the profession looks like
- Between direct care and clinical and RSS ambiguity about what peers do. Lack of understanding of role how they are different. Fear of unknown, not trusting towards peer staff don't know about our training, gray areas with boundaries-what can you do?
- Big picture-peers can work with diverse populations, can be their own department
- Long term funding
- Role can become pigeonholed within an organization
- Organizations could be incentivized for participating in RI programs, Demystifying, etc. Center of excellence when they understand peers and utilize the role correctly.
- Challenge of staying peer, staying employable. Staying within boundaries
- Should peers educate staff about role
- NEO trainings
- How to hold an orientation, elevator speech, how to explain the role

Miracle question-if you woke up and all of your training and professional development needs were being met, what would this look like?

- Livable pay scale, included as a peer staff member in planning/treatment planning
- Recognition of our value to our agency
- College credits for trainings that we take
- Consistency across board core values/lessons/skills/roles but still flexible to meet agency specific needs
- Community outreach and awareness building what are recovery support services
- Understanding of ethics and how it relates to peer support role in comparison to other disciplines
- Teaching other disciplines in school about recovery and peer support
- Peer support advocacy day
- Understanding our value

### **Debrief, planning for next meeting**

The group debriefed the meeting and made plans to continue discussing the Peer Professional Development Institute via zoom meetings until the next in-person meeting in July.