2019-2020 Via Hope Peer Services Implementation Learning Community Program Overview

About the Via Hope Recovery Institute

The Via Hope Recovery Institute aims to promote behavioral health system transformation by helping organizations develop practices that support and expect recovery, and by promoting the voices of people with lived experience, youth, and family members. Recovery Institute initiatives are designed to support the implementation of new practices, shift organizational culture, promote innovation, and increase collaboration within and among teams. Peer Services Implementation (PSI) is a specific program within the Recovery Institute. In this document, you will find information about Via Hope’s 2019–2020 Peer Services Implementation Program, including purpose, program description, expectations for participants, and requirements.

Peer Services Implementation Program: Peer Specialists in Texas

Via Hope held its first Peer Specialist Certification Training and launched the Peer Specialist Learning Community in 2010. Today, over a thousand people have been trained as peer specialists and there has been a veritable explosion in the growth of peer support positions in the Texas behavioral health system. As the value of peer support has become recognized, reliable consultative support for the implementation of effective peer services is essential.

The 2019–2020 Peer Services Implementation (PSI) Program is designed to bring together supervisors of peer specialists to deepen their understanding of peer support services and develop the skills necessary to support people working as professional peer specialists in Texas. Furthermore, this program aims to expand the number of field-based leaders who can serve as subject matter experts on peer work at their agency. There is a competitive application process. Multiple supervisors from one organization, in either clinical or peer support roles, supervising Mental Health Peer Specialists (MHPS) and/or Recovery Support Peer Specialists (RSPS), may apply to participate.

Participants Can Expect the Following Support in the PSI Program

- Tailored support to help participants meet goals as they define them,
- Ongoing access to a community of supervisors navigating similar supervision and peer services implementation challenges,
- Programmatic structure that enables ongoing learning and exploration of supervisory practices and styles, opportunities to test out and implement new practices, and support to try out new programmatic approaches,
Tools and resources only available to program participants,
- Regular access to subject matter experts who provide individualized consultation, and
- Continuing education hours that will fulfill Peer Specialist Supervisor requirements for two years, including Ethics.

Over the course of the program, activities will address a variety of topics and common challenges faced by supervisors. Some content will support general supervision topics, such as person-centered practices that enhance staff engagement, effective strategies for addressing employee wellness, and harnessing the power of middle management - representing agency standards while acting as a fierce advocate for staff. Other topics specific to peer specialist supervision will include: incorporating peer professional code of ethics into supervision, role of lived experience and the use of story, promoting integration of peer workers within multidisciplinary teams, and supporting a supervisee who is also a service recipient at the agency. Additionally, participants will be invited to take on broader topics that apply to program implementation and development, like hiring and recruitment, organization of peer positions across the agency, and documentation and billing practices. For more details on programmatic content and learning objectives, see the informational webinar posted on the PSI webpage.

Requirements to Apply for the PSI Program

- Review all of the program activities in order to determine whether 1) this program is a fit for your needs and 2) you can fully commit to the program requirements.
- Currently, or within six months of the application, supervise at least one peer specialist.
- Have previously completed Via Hope’s Demystifying the Peer Workforce or a Peer Specialist Supervisor Training, or will do so within a few months of beginning the program. (Note: Any participants who cannot complete this training prior to the Opening Gathering in January, are required to complete the free, 2.5 hour online course: Recovery-Oriented Practices at ViaHopeOnlineLearning.org.)
- Submit online application, in its entirety, by the November 8th, 11:00 pm CST deadline.
- Applicants must be employed at a not-for-profit, behavioral health service provider. (Note: This document has been updated. Organizations of employment do not have to receive public funds.)

Participant Responsibilities

Participants will be asked to...

- Complete all of the required activities in timeline (see below);
- Commit to independent activities, including the development of supervision-specific goals;
- Collaborate and communicate with other staff involved in peer services implementation, such as human resources, quality management, and training staff; and
Complete program evaluation activities.

Timeline of Program Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 16 - November 8, 2019</td>
<td>Application Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 15</td>
<td>Sites notified of acceptance status</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 17, 2019 11:00-12:30 CST</td>
<td>Orientation Webinar</td>
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<tr>
<td>January, 2020</td>
<td>In-person Opening Gathering for all participants</td>
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<td>February - July, 2020</td>
<td>Remote small group consultation sessions each month; Educational webinars (offered monthly); Independent work by participants; Individual consultation with Via Hope staff upon request</td>
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<tr>
<td>August, 2020</td>
<td>In-person Closing Gathering for all participants; Program evaluation activities (e.g. surveys, interviews)</td>
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Program Evaluation Activities
As noted above, all participants will be asked to take part in evaluating the effectiveness of the program. Via Hope may employ a variety of evaluation elements, such as training feedback forms, program improvement discussions (i.e. focus groups, interviews), and pre-and-post-program surveys.

What people say about Recovery Institute support for peer services implementation:

Without the support and technical assistance provided through Via Hope, we would not be nearly as progressed in the Recovery Oriented System of Care or peer integration as we now are. The resources have been invaluable in moving our organization from one of a behavioral system to one of recovery.

- Peer Specialist Integration Project Participant

I wish I had this months ago! The role, hiring, supervision -- all of it was helpful! Handouts, PowerPoints, code of ethics, all helpful material.

- Demystifying the Peer Workforce Training Participant

All presenters were knowledgeable and could pull from experience.

- Demystifying the Peer Workforce Training Participant
Application Process

As part of the 2019-2020 Peer Services Implementation Program application process, applicants will complete an online application. A preview of the application will be posted when the application opens so that applicants can review questions prior to submitting their applications. Information about the application process can be found on the Via Hope website. Learn more on the PSI webpage here.

Application Timeline

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>October 16, 2019</td>
<td>Via Hope hosts an informational webinar on the upcoming program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 16, 2019</td>
<td>The online application opens.</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 8, 2019</td>
<td>The online application will close. All applications must be submitted by 11:00 pm CST to be considered.</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 15, 2019</td>
<td>Accepted applicants will be notified.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December, 2019</td>
<td>Orientation activities for program will begin.</td>
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Application Review

A review committee will screen applications to ensure applicants have committed to all required activities and essential elements of the application have been completed. Following this step, all eligible applications will be reviewed and considered for the 2019-2020 Peer Services Implementation program.

Selection of applicants will be based on such factors as:

- Demonstrated commitment to and engagement in promoting recovery and resiliency-oriented practices.
- Willingness to act as a change agent within the organization where they are employed, removing barriers for peer services.
- Readiness to take action to adopt new supervisory practices during the program.
- Willingness to honestly reflect on one’s own learning and development and to support other participants’ learning needs.

**Conclusion**

**Registration Fees**

The 2019-2020 Peer Services Implementation Program will be offered at no cost to participating organizations. However, participating organizations will invest significant staff time and energy into the program. The cost of the 2019-2020 Peer Services Implementation Program is covered by a grant from the Medical and Social Services Division of Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

For program gatherings, lodging, breakfast, and lunch are typically provided. However, no travel stipends are included for participants and other travel costs must be covered by participating organizations.

**Questions?**

For questions/information regarding the 2019 Peer Services Implementation Learning Community, please contact Alejandra Adan, PSI Coordinator, at alejandra.adan@viahope.org.

For general inquiries regarding the Recovery Institute, please contact Amanda Bowman, Recovery Institute Manager, at amanda.bowman@viahope.org.

To learn more about Via Hope: www.viahope.org

Click **HERE** to submit an application.