



*decade*  
*2009-2019*



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# *A Word from the Executive Director*

Dear Friends:

**On February 1, 2019,** Via Hope celebrated its tenth anniversary. I've been fortunate to be the first and only director of Via Hope for those ten years, and with apologies to the Grateful Dead, I'd just like to say, "What a long interesting trip it's been!" (and yes, strange at times).



*"What a long interesting trip it's been!"*

It took Via Hope a few years to fully develop into what we have now become. We are fortunate to have had the steady support of our two main funders, the Texas Department of State Health Services (now the Health and Human Services Commission) and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. With their guidance and some great staff, we developed from a small training and technical assistance center housed in another organization to a respected nonprofit education, training, and consulting organization. Our legal name is Mental Health Resource of Texas, but y'all know us as Via Hope.

As you will read in our timeline, our roots extend back to the President's New Freedom Commission. Some of our earliest programs focused on training and certifying peer specialists and family partners. We quickly developed the Recovery Institute to promote person centered, recovery-oriented care in mental health provider organizations.

From there we developed programs to support peer run organizations and develop community leaders among the population of people living in recovery from mental health challenges. All of these programs contribute to the New Freedom Commission's vision of a consumer, family and youth driven, "Recovery Focused" mental health system.



This report is a reflection on, and celebration of, where we have come over the last ten years, plus what we hope is an exciting preview of where we are headed next. Join us as we retrace our steps and count up the lives that we have touched over the last ten years. The statistics in this report showing the number of individuals who have attended our training or participated in other programs will give you some sense of the impact we've had. Multiply that impact many times over by all the other people these individuals have helped, both in their jobs and in their personal lives, to get a true picture of our impact.

The individuals that participate in our trainings and programs are also responsible for the success Via Hope has enjoyed, and for that we thank you. Your continued support is invaluable. Public priorities related to mental health evolve over the years, but we will continue to focus on the idea of recovery for all. We know recovery is real because we witness it every day. Let us share some of these success stories with you.

Sincerely,

Dennis H Bach, Executive Director  
Via Hope

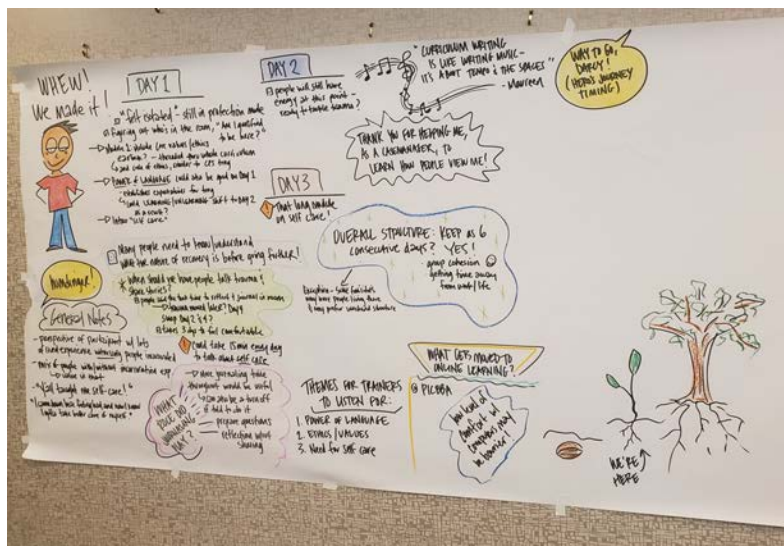
*"The individuals that participate in our trainings and programs are also responsible for the success Via Hope has enjoyed, and for that we thank you. Your continued support is invaluable."*



# Identity Statement

## Vision:

Via Hope invests in people and organizations who want to re-envision mental health, through workforce development, community building, system transformation, and leadership development. We envision a future where all people, families, and communities can thrive, not just survive; where self-determination, equality, and hope are the reality.



## Identity Statement:

### What

Invest. Re-Envision. Respond.

We will invest in people and organizations who want to re-envision mental health. We will respond to the needs of our partners and colleagues in the Texas mental health system to build environments of compassion and healing.

*We will passionately promote the power and wisdom of people with lived experience as necessary leaders in all of our work.*

## Why

We exist to amplify the vision that all people, families, and communities deserve to thrive and not just survive! For us, this will look like:

- Self-determination for all people and families in decisions related to their health and spirit;
- Systems imbued with core principles of resiliency, compassion, and trust, that listen and respond to the needs of their communities;
- A socially and politically equitable world free from stigma;
- A culture where authenticity and transparency around lived experience is seen and valued as a necessary strength in leadership.



## How

### Workforce Development

We will support the growth of Mental Health Peer Specialist and Certified Family Partner workforces in Texas by:

- Providing high quality training and continuing education to Mental Health Peer Specialists and Certified Family Partners;
- Creating innovative programs and policies to support the professional development of Mental Health Peer Specialists and Certified Family Partners as workforces in Texas;
- Offering quality support and technical assistance to support organizations who currently employ Mental Health Peer Specialists and Certified Family Partners; and
- Connecting Mental Health Peer Specialists and Certified Family Partners throughout the state to build statewide power and capacity.

## Community Building

We will connect people throughout the state to build and strengthen networks of passionate mental health professionals by:

- Gathering Mental Health Peer Specialist and Certified Family Partner leaders as well as recovery-oriented clinicians to help build Via Hope programs and grow the presence and power of the workforces; and
- Offering and promoting platforms for relationship building, consultation and education through webinars, conferences, collaborations and events.

## Systems Transformation

We will invest in Texas mental health systems to catalyze the movement towards recovery by:

- Partnering with mental health organizations throughout the state to change policy and culture in their workplace to be person-centered, family-centered and trauma-responsive;
- Ensuring that our programs and partnerships are intersectional and inclusive through collaboration with experts in their respective fields; and
- Providing training and consultation to mental health professionals including clinicians, executive leadership, and support staff on topics like person-centered recovery planning, peer specialist and family partner integration, and recovery-oriented care.







## Leadership Development

We will uplift and support emerging and established leaders, with a specific emphasis on amplifying the voices of people with lived experience, by:

- Developing innovative programs and trainings to spark peoples' strengths, creativity, and confidence as leaders;
- Providing ongoing opportunities for collaboration, intentional networking, and both organizational and programmatic support for peer run organizations;
- Cultivating environments where people feel empowered to become leaders and have the support they need to flourish; and
- Promoting the vision, creativity and leadership of our workforce in the community and beyond.

*“Without Via Hope and the training that I've been offered, I would be a lesser peer. Because of them, I've been able to help others in a far more substantial way. I owe a lot to them.”*  
- Steven, Peer Voice Project Participant

# *Our Programs*

## Mental Health Peer Specialist

**Since 2010**, Via Hope has operated the only ongoing, statewide training and certification program for peer specialists in Texas. A peer specialist is an individual in recovery from a mental health challenge who has been trained on how to use their recovery story to provide support, encouragement, and hope for others working on their own recovery.

Peer support is an evidence-based practice that is strongly supported by federal organizations, from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to the Veterans Administration. Most of the peer specialists in Texas work in mental health clinics, hospitals, or the Veterans Administration. However, they can also be used to great effect in integrated health clinics, schools, and any other environment that includes people with mental health challenges.

In 2019, the Health and Human Services Commission amended the State Medicaid Plan to make peer support a service that can be billed to Medicaid. A new title, “Mental Health Peer Specialist” (MHPS) was created and the responsibility for providing the certification for these was transferred to new Certification Boards.



Via Hope remains the premier organization providing training statewide for MHPSs. We use a combination of experienced in-house peer specialist trainers and contracted trainers who continue to practice in their field. These contract trainers bring their ongoing, real world experience into the training, providing for a richer learning environment.

### Continuing Education for Peer Specialists

Successful completion of the 40-hour MHPS training and the certification exam makes someone eligible to apply for certification. However, like any other profession, an MHPS needs additional training over time to further develop their knowledge and skills. So, Via Hope has also developed several continuing education courses (collectively referred to as Endorsements) specifically designed for peer specialists.

These courses include: Peer Support Whole Health and Resiliency, Trauma Informed Peer Support, Co-Occurring Challenges (for individuals with mental health and substance use issues), Ethics, Community ReEntry, Trauma Responsive - Healing Centered Peer Support, and Group Facilitation Skills.

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“ I have a record of 26 arrests and 23 felonies. I got sober at 57 and live with anxiety, depression, and PTSD. My greatest joy comes from working with the older homeless population — watching that flicker of hope when I share my story. Being a peer specialist means for the first time, my past is my greatest asset. ”  
-Karen, Mental Health Peer Specialist

## Certified Family Partner

**In 2011**, Via Hope developed the first and only ongoing, statewide training and certification program for Family Partners. A Certified Family Partner (CFP) is a parent or guardian who has raised a child with emotional or mental health challenges and has learned how to navigate the systems of care in order to advocate for their child. The family partner training teaches these parents how to help other parents/guardians who are facing similar circumstances, usually for the first time. It is a form of family peer support and is recognized by SAMHSA as an evidence -based practice.

Most of the Certified Family Partners in Texas work for publicly funded mental health clinics operated by the Local Mental Health Authorities, although there are a growing number in private and public hospitals, residential treatment centers, juvenile justice centers, and other settings. Family partners work to give voice to, and promote recovery and resiliency within, families of children with mental, emotional and behavioral health challenges. They work to raise awareness and reduce stigma around mental health in schools, faith communities, state agencies and communities.

We use a combination of experienced, in-house family partner trainers and contract trainers for this program. As with peer specialist training, this allows us to share actual, current examples of situations that family partners are likely to face.





### Continuing Education for Certified Family Partners

Like peer specialists, Certified Family Partners need continuing education to enhance their knowledge and skills. Via Hope has developed endorsement trainings for Certified Family Partners including Wrap-Around Services, Special Education, and Juvenile Justice.

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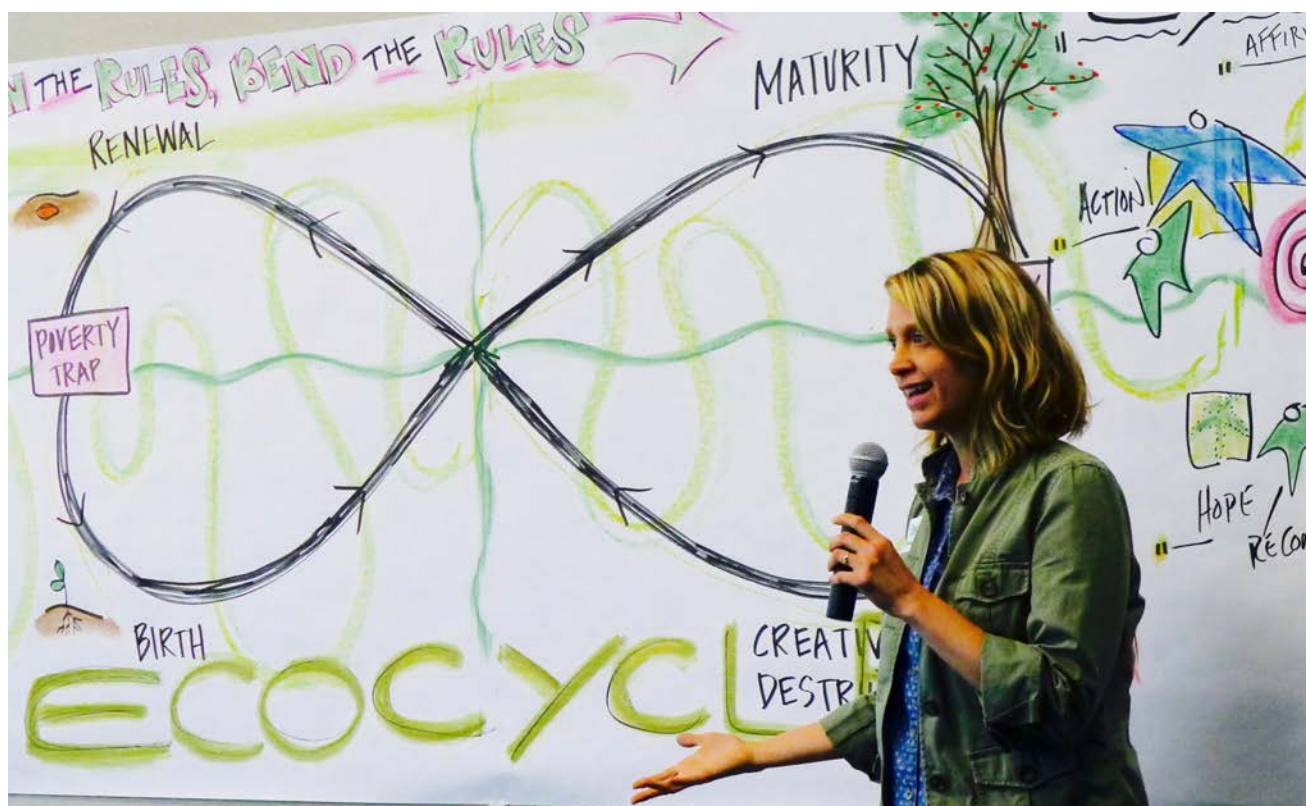
“Being a family partner has given me the chance to take my personal journey and use it to help others in similar situations — to help them maintain and overcome until they are able to walk their journey alone. The impact I’m able to have gives me hope for the future of mental health as a whole, but more importantly, hope for the future of children with mental health conditions.”  
-Jessica, Certified Family Partner

# Recovery Institute

**The Via Hope Recovery Institute**, created in 2012, promotes behavioral health system transformation by helping organizations develop practices that support and expect recovery, and by elevating the voices of people with lived experience. Recovery Institute initiatives are designed to support the implementation of new practices, shift organizational culture, promote innovation and increase collaboration within and among teams. Our interactive training and consultation supports organizations as they respond to challenges and opportunities arising in our rapidly changing environment. Following is a summary of some of the major activities in the Recovery Institute.

## Awareness Building

Via Hope hosts webinars and workshops on transformation, recovery, wellness and related service topics. These activities are designed for a variety of professionals and do not require a long-term time commitment.



### Peer Services Implementation

As the value of peer support is recognized and peer support services have become increasingly widespread in Texas, so has the demand for effective consultative support for program development. The Peer Services Implementation (PSI) program helps provider organizations effectively implement peer support by providing a variety of site-specific and cross-site activities, including Demystifying the Peer Workforce workshops. Organizational teams focus on change across five domains: Organizational Culture, Funding Peer Specialist Positions, Recruitment and Hiring of Peer Specialists, Peer Support Staff Role Definition and Clarification, and Supervision and Career Advancement.

### Recovery Institute Leadership Academy

The Recovery Institute Leadership Academy (RILA) has worked with provider organizations to deepen their recovery orientation by promoting shared leadership and creating organizational culture change. RILA most recently focused on the relationship between staff well-being and quality service provision, with an emphasis on how to address staff burnout, secondary traumatic stress, and compassion fatigue through a series of site-specific and cross-site events. RILA Teams developed strategies to promote individual self-care and organizational wellness.

### Transition Age Youth Initiative

The Transition Age Youth (TAY) Initiative helps participating organizations learn and develop practices that support and develop practices that support and expect resiliency, assist youth in their transition to young adulthood and making their own life-supporting decisions, and elevate youth voice in a way that improves services and the environment. Via Hope defines Transition Age Youth as youth and young adults ages 14-24.



## Person Centered Recovery Planning

Person-centered care has been recognized as a promising tool for transforming the current behavioral health system and restoring certain elementary freedoms to individuals receiving services and their loved ones (Institute of Medicine, 2001). Person-centered planning has been linked to better outcomes for individuals, greater individual engagement and lower health care delivery costs (Kaufman, L., Lodge, A.C., Daggett, P., & Stevens Manser, S., 2016) as well as helping to meet regulatory requirements (Tondora, Miller, & Davidson, 2012).

The Via Hope Recovery Institute has worked to promote Person Centered Recovery Planning (PCRP) implementation at Local Mental Health Authorities, state hospitals, and progressive private psychiatric hospitals across Texas. With Via Hope's support, organizational teams work to implement PCRP through staff training and supervision, building on-site training capacity, changes to policies and procedures (including electronic health records), and leadership practices.







“ The people we serve have gotten a positive benefit from our training at the Recovery Institute. They show up to appointments more often because they feel more listened to and valued. Because of the training, we have seen actual positive outcomes with those we serve. ”

-Lauren, Recovery Institute Participant

# Peer Run Organization Project (PROP)

**Peer run organizations** are organizations that are operated by and, importantly, governed by people with lived experience of mental health challenges and recovery. They provide a variety of support services and programs that either support, or serve as a replacement for, clinical services. Many individuals rely on these organizations to help maintain their wellness and minimize the need for clinical services.

Since 2013, Via Hope has operated a Peer Run Organizations Project (PROP) that provides support and training for peer run organizations across Texas. Currently there are thirteen participating organizations; some of these operate primarily in the mental health environment while others work primarily in the substance use environment. Participating organizations have quarterly meetings hosted by Via Hope to learn, share, and network with each other.

PROP works with two types of peer run organizations:

Consumer Operated Service Providers (COSPs) are a SAMHSA-recognized Evidence Based Practice. COSPs are independent organizations operated and governed by individuals in recovery, and a fundamental component of their services is peer support. COSPs have a unique and valuable role in a recovery-oriented system of care.

Recovery Community Organizations (RCOs) are similar to COSPs but work in the area of recovery from addiction. Recovery community organizations are independent, nonprofit, and led and governed by people in recovery, family members, friends and allies. While each organization has its own mission, they all focus on the core purposes of public education, advocacy, and peer-based and other recovery support services.



## Peer Voice Project

**In 2003,** The President's New Freedom Commission called for transforming the nation's mental health system to a recovery model driven by people with lived experience of mental health challenges. Individuals need a voice in both their individual treatment and in the values and operation of the mental health system overall. Via Hope helps develop and amplify that voice. The Peer Voice Project is a year-long, transformational leadership program that is available to anyone that identifies as a peer.

The Peer Voice Project incorporates practices that strengthen an individual's ability to increasingly step into leadership roles with confidence, along with tools and support to successfully achieve their personal and organizational visions. The Peer Voice Project is a hybrid program, consisting of four interactive in-person gatherings, five online learning modules, and one webinar. Some topics include: leadership styles, communication skills, social justice, team building, grant writing, event organizing, advocacy, self-care, and healing-centered leadership. Participants have the hands-on experience of building a community or agency based project of their choice.

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*“ Every time I've incorporated what I've learned from Via Hope into my life, professionally or personally, it's worked. Everything they teach is valid and reliable, and the work they do is priceless. ”*  
- Tracey, Peer Voice Project Participant





# *History and Milestones*

**A timeline of significant milestones** in Via Hope's ten-year history has to start several years before Via Hope was created. Our roots started growing during the President's New Freedom Commission in 2003. The Commission called for transforming the country's mental health system from a traditional, medically-oriented model to a consumer, family, and youth driven "Recovery Model", a model in which recovery is the expected outcome for anyone with a mental health condition.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) responded by awarding Mental Health Transformation grants to several states, including Texas, for the purpose of developing the infrastructure necessary to support this transformed, recovery-oriented system. Via Hope was conceived of as a training and technical assistance center and a key component of that new infrastructure. So, with that as context, here are some of the most significant milestones in our development.

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## Important Moments

**2008:** The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health agree to collaborate on creating a new training and technical assistance center. DSHS takes the lead, issuing a Request for Proposals for one or more nonprofit, mental health advocacy organizations to apply to create this Center.

**February, 2009:** The Initial 55 month grant from DSHS to Mental Health America of Texas and NAMI Texas goes into effect. The name Via Hope is created and the logo developed.

An important piece of the initial statement of work is to research the use of peer support in other states. Based on this research, Via Hope is directed to develop a training and certification program for Certified Peer Specialists.

**January, 2010:** Via Hope hosts its first event, the kick-off meeting for a Peer Specialist Learning Community to support its new training and certification program.

**March, 2010:** Via Hope conducts the first certification training for peer specialists, using our contractor, Appalachian Consulting Group.



Part of their contract is to teach Via Hope how to conduct the training ourselves in the future.

**July, 2010:** The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health begins financially supporting Via Hope through a grant to NAMI Texas. An important piece of the initial statement of work is to develop a training and certification program for family partners.

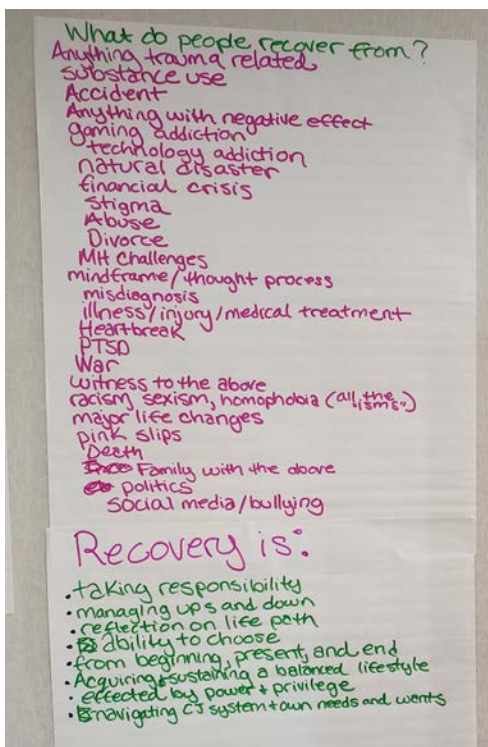
**April, 2012:** Via Hope's advisory committee, along with representatives of DSHS and the Hogg Foundation agree on a long-term goal of having Via Hope become a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.



**October, 2012:** Via Hope launches the Recovery Institute, a series of programs designed to help provider organizations examine their culture and practice to learn how to become more recovery oriented.

**November, 2012:** Via Hope conducts the first training for Certified Family Partners. Five trainings are conducted over the next ten months, to train all of the individuals across the State that are already doing this work but without standardized training.

**September, 2013:** Upon the end of the initial grant to MHAT/NAMI, Via Hope becomes part of The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work, Center for Social Work Research.





We are housed in the new Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health. What was originally intended to be a five-year residency at UT instead lasts one year.

**September, 2014:** A new stand-alone nonprofit, Mental Health Resource of Texas, supported by grants from DSHS and the Hogg Foundation, begins operating as Via Hope.

**April, 2015:** Via Hope receives a separate four-year planning grant from the Hogg Foundation to implement the Recovery to Practice Next Steps training for peer specialists. This is part of a larger collaboration between Hogg and the Meadows Foundation to implement the six federally developed RTP curricula for various mental health professions. The Meadows Foundation provides implementation grants to the six participating organizations, and asks Via Hope to serve as the fiscal agent to disseminate all six grants.

**September, 2015:** Via Hope receives a new five-year grant from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission along with a new three-year grant from the Hogg Foundation. During this grant period, Via Hope continues and expands the training available for peer specialists and family partners, develops its first online training as part of the Recovery Institute, expands the Peer Run Organizations Project (PROP) to include Recovery Community Organizations (peer run substance use organizations), creates the Peer Voice leadership project, and continues to work with all of the Local Mental Health Authorities and state hospitals through the Recovery Institute.

**September, 2018:** The Hogg Foundation continues its support of Via Hope by providing a new three year grant.

**February, 2019: Via Hope reaches its tenth anniversary!**

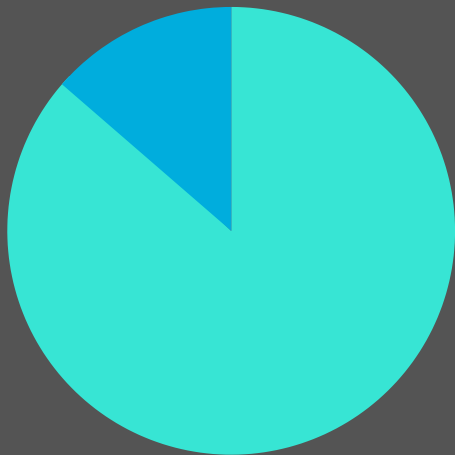
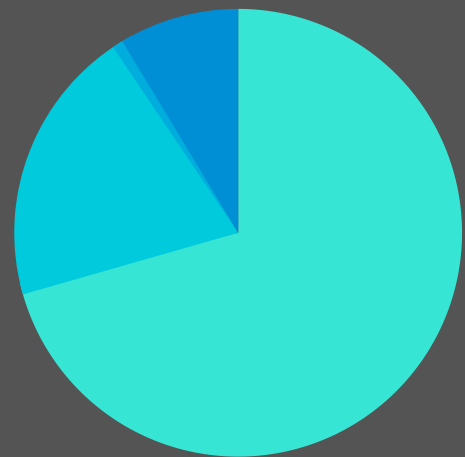


# *Stats - Via Hope at a Glance*

## 2018 Financials

### REVENUES

Federal Grants	\$1,543,006
Contributions	\$437,510
Contracts	\$17,018
Program Income	\$189,273
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,186,807</b>



### EXPENSES

Program Services	\$1,806,175
Management & General	\$285,300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,091,475</b>



*A Decade of  
Via Hope  
By the Numbers*

**1,293**

**MENTAL HEALTH  
PEER SPECIALISTS**

trained to use their recovery  
stories to help others

**270**

**CERTIFIED FAMILY  
PARTNERS**

trained to use their experience to  
support other caregivers

**30** mental health  
authorities & **8**  
state hospitals

made organizational  
improvements because of  
**RECOVERY INSTITUTE  
PROGRAMS**

**22** mental health &  
substance recovery  
organizations

have participated in the

**PEER RUN  
ORGANIZATIONS PROJECT  
(PROP)**

**42** individuals in  
recovery

have participated in  
cohorts of the **3**

**PEER VOICE PROJECT**

**210** individuals in  
recovery

trained on how to develop a

**WELLNESS RECOVERY  
ACTION PLAN (WRAP®)**

**80+**

participants trained and  
certified as

**WRAP® FACILITATORS**

# *Board of Directors*

## Officers

David Weden, President  
Chris Schimpf, Treasurer

Linda Werlein, Vice-President  
Rep. John Davis, Secretary

## Directors

Dr. Nancy Speck  
Sam Shore

Dr. Maurice Dutton  
Alex Donnini

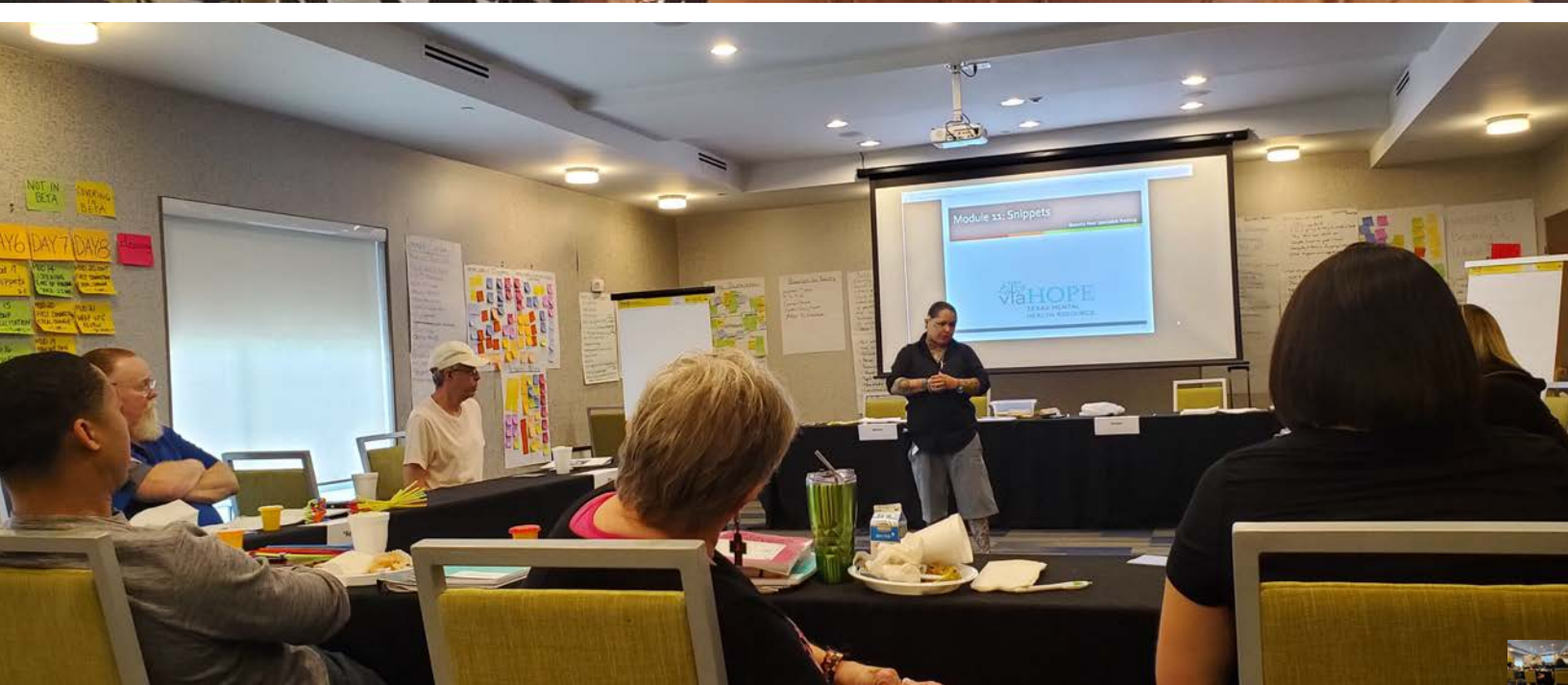


# *Looking Ahead*

**Via Hope has several exciting initiatives and programs** under development which will be introduced over the next year. These include:

- A new **Reentry Peer Support** certification program to train people with lived experience of incarceration, along with mental health or substance use challenges, to provide peer support to other individuals newly released, or soon to be released, from incarceration.
- A new **Peer Professional Development Institute** for peer specialists to further develop their knowledge and skills and develop a statewide community of highly competent peer specialists.
- Expansion of our online trainings using a **new eLearning platform**. This will increase the availability of our training and reduce the cost.
- **New continuing education trainings** for peer specialists on facilitation skills, healing centered care, and working with transition age youth.
- **New initiatives for youth**, including a continuing education training and a pilot project with Integral Care to provide peer support in an area high school.
- An enhanced focus on improving peer specialist supervision through the Recovery Institute's **Peer Services Implementation (PSI) Program**.
- **Spanish-language** peer specialist and family partner curricula and trainings.
- Our **first training outside of Texas**, in partnership with the new SSW Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC), beginning our evolution from a statewide to a regional, and eventually national, training organization.







# *Get Involved*

**From all of us at Via Hope**, we appreciate the support we have received from all of you for the last ten years. Many of the people we have served are familiar with one or more programs we created, but very few have had the opportunity to experience the full breadth of what we offer. This report is intended to provide a glimpse of that. All of the programs and trainings were created to meet a need, and together they add up to a comprehensive whole.

We ask for your continued support in driving systemic change. The Texas behavioral health system has made a lot of progress towards a recovery orientation in the last ten years, but the work is not done.

Via Hope will continue being a change agent and a part of the recovery movement, but real change will come from the efforts of all the people we train and serve; from all of you.





### How to get involved:

Donations are always welcome! You can help Via Hope to continue providing quality training, consultation, and education throughout the state of Texas and nationally by going to our website at [www.viahope.org](http://www.viahope.org) and clicking on the Donate button to make a tax-deductible donation.

We are actively seeking grant funding to complement our support from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, The Meadows Foundation, and more. Please contact our Executive Director, Dennis Bach, MPA, to discuss a partnership between Via Hope and your organization.

You can help us spread awareness of our programs by following us on social media:

Facebook: Via Hope - Texas Mental Health Resource

Twitter and Instagram: @viahopeorg

Pinterest: viahopeorg

Linked In: Via Hope



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