

PEER-DELIVERED EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

INTRODUCTION:

Peers who provide employment-related supports and services are an increasingly important component of peer-delivered services gaining interest and attention across the country. Several different peer organizations or programs in the United States are currently involved in providing peer-delivered employment support services. Additionally, peers in several locations are also engaged in providing employment supports and services within a traditional mental health agency environment.

We want, then, to provide you details of what is being done in the employment-related peer-delivered services subject field so you can know not only what efforts are currently underway, but, also, to help stimulate further thought and discussion about other and different employment-related supports and services which could also benefit the peer community.

The groups, organizations or programs we feature here are an overview of what is presently being done in this field. We have tried to offer a representative sample of groups or organizations each of which is doing something a bit different in its own way from what other groups or organizations, also in our list, are doing so that you, in total, can have a good sense overall of what is being done in this field.

As well as providing this information to you to help stimulate thought and discussion in the general sense about the different types of peer-delivered employment supports and services, if you live within the immediate or proximate area of one of the organizations we list, and you have an interest in potentially accessing services for yourself, these organizations could be an individual personal resource for you.

Do be aware, however, that all of the organizations, programs or agencies listed below provide employment-related supports and services for a designated geographical area only. All of them also have eligibility requirements associated with who it is they can serve. Please contact them directly if you have an interest in potentially receiving employment-related services from them so they can provide you full details about their geographical service area and eligibility requirements.

EXAMPLES OF PEER-DELIVERED EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS AND SERVICES BEING PROVIDED AROUND THE COUNTRY:

BrainStorm Career Services

1352 N Academy Blvd.
Colorado Springs, CO, 80909
(719) 492.9335

BrainStorm is an employment-focused program based in Colorado Springs in El Paso County in Colorado as part of the state-wide peer-run Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Colorado. The majority of the leadership and staff of BrainStorm are peers who have already either transitioned from recovery to employment positions for themselves or are actively and ongoingly engaged in this transition process. BrainStorm offers a variety of employment-related support services including support in job searches, resume writing support, assistance in signing up for services from Vocational Rehabilitation, and on-site skills trainings. In addition, BrainStorm hosts a job club, which meets weekly, and which provides its members an opportunity to share and discuss challenges members are encountering in their job searches, and to collectively, as peers, problem-solve possible solutions for those challenges.

Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey (CSPNJ)

Administrative Offices
8 & 11 Spring Street
Freehold, NJ 07728
(732) 780.1175

CSPNJ is a nonprofit organization directed, managed, and staffed by a mix of mental health peers and non-peers which provides a variety of services to the peer community at multiple locations throughout New Jersey. One of their programmatic activities is a specific type of employment supports and services which is known as Supported Employment.

Supported Employment (with both the letter “S” in “Supported” and “E” in “Employment” in upper-case) refers to a specific type of employment supports and services which are provided to participants, who receive Supported Employment services, in a prescribed manner and are provided to participants in a designated sequence order.

There are different Supported Employment models in use across the country. CSPNJ uses what is called the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of Supported Employment. Two of the distinctive and integral components of all types of Supported Employment are the initiation of a rapid job search starting almost immediately after an individual enrolls in the program, and the provision of what are called “follow-along

supports” once an individual has secured a position. Follow-along supports are customized to the specific needs of the individual so as to best increase the likelihood of success in the job placement.

Additionally, individuals who are enrolled in Supported Employment programs customarily receive support in the traditional job search areas of resume development, career counseling, and support in preparing for a job interview.

You can find more information about CSPNY at this weblink: <http://cspnj.org/> and on their Supported Employment program itself through a button on their website.

Connecticut Recover Employment Consultation Services (C-RECS)

Focus on Recovery-United, Inc.
100 Riverview Center, Suite 272
Middletown, CT, 06457
(860) 704.0556

C-RECS is a project funded by Mental Health Workforce Transformation funds in Connecticut. The specific emphasis of C-RECS is to provide coaching, mentoring, education, and training to mental health peers so they can assume positions in the behavioral health workforce. Peers interested in pursuing a career in the behavioral health workforce can receive ongoing training focused on the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) model and becoming a facilitator for it in a behavioral health environment; ongoing training in the Intentional Peer Support (IPS) model and becoming an IPS facilitator in a behavioral health environment; and training in the Pathways FOR-U peer recovery educator approach for use in a behavioral health environment.

You can find more information about C-RECS at this weblink: <http://www.creecs.org/>

Hero House

14230 NE 21st St.
Bellevue, WA, 98007
(425)614.1282

Hero House, as part of its services to its members, has as one of its major activities the Career Development Center. The twin foci of the Career Development Center are support in the areas of facilitating further educational opportunities for its members, and employment-related supports and services of the kind as are requested by its members.

As part of the further education component of the mission of the Career Development Center, peers can be supported and taught by other peers the skills and abilities necessary to achieve a GED, including courses in reading, writing, math, and computer

skills. Additionally, Hero House assists members who wish to pursue educational opportunities in a learning environment outside of Hero House, for example, at a community college.

The employment part of Hero House's services focuses on assisting members in job searches, resume development, and necessary customized services and supports identified by members to help them achieve employment-related goals.

H.O.P.E. Program

Mental Health Assoc. of Nebraska
1645 "N" Street, Suite A
Lincoln, NE, 68508
(402) 441.4372

The H.O.P.E. Program is a Supported Employment program, fully peer-run and staffed by peers, offered by the Mental Health Assoc. of Nebraska. Every individual who enrolls in the Supported Employment program offered by H.O.P.E. works in partnership with a peer Employment Specialist to develop an individualized Employment Plan that is directly responsive to the desires and employment goals of the individual participant. Based on the desires and employment goals as they are defined in this individualized Employment Plan, the H.O.P.E. Employment Specialist then implements the Supported Employment services in the manner and in the sequence of services as are designated in the Supported Employment model.

As with all Supported Employment programs, "follow-along" supports, as self-determined by the individual peer, are an integral part of helping an individual to succeed in a job placement. The H.O.P.E. Program is especially innovative both in the types of follow-along supports they provide to their participants and in their strong emphasis on the H.O.P.E. program participant being the person who decides what types of supports are most beneficial and at what point in the post-hire process. Additionally, in the H.O.P.E. program, the follow-along supports end only when the participant instructs the Employment Specialist that he/she wants them to end; additionally, both parties have a shared understanding that the supports can again be made available if the participant should wish them to restart.

You can find more information about the H.O.P.E. Program at this weblink:

<http://hope.mha-ne.org/>

Howie the Harp Advocacy Center

2090 Adam Clayton Powell Blvd., 12th Floor
New York, NY 10027
(212) 780.1400

The Howie the Harp Advocacy Center is a peer-run employment-focused program of Community Access in New York City. The primary emphasis of its employment activities is in training peers so that they can assume positions in the Human Services field post-training. Their programs focus on job skills training, enhancing reading and writing skills as they relate to employment goals, increasing computer literacy, and overall workforce preparation activities. This work is done in a class training environment, with additional individual support, which consists of over 500 hours of classroom instruction.

Howie the Harp has an application process for individuals who are interested in enrolling in their classes. The classes themselves are free of charge to successful applicants.

You can find out more information about Howie the Harp Advocacy Center at this weblink: <http://www.communityaccess.org/what-we-do/hth-peer-advocacy-ctr>

Laurie Mitchell Empowerment and Career Center

6295 Edsall Road, Suite 175
Alexandria, VA 22312
(703) 461.3886

The Laurie Mitchell Peer Center in Alexandria, Virginia is one of the pioneers of peer-delivered employment supports and services. They have been providing employment-related supports and services to their members for 17 years.

They provide a wide array of different support and employment-related services including free training in most popular computer software applications as well as free training for individuals who want to learn the basics of how to use the internet and utilize e-mail. Additionally, they work directly with peers to teach them job hunting skills and support them while the job hunt is underway; teach classes on resume and cover letter writing and assist members in preparation of these items; work with members to identify job leads; facilitate longer-term career planning with members; conduct practice job interview sessions with members so members can feel comfortable in the actual interview environment; and, provide direct assistance to members to help with benefits counseling so members can make an informed decision on pursuing employment or not after the member is fully versed on the impact or not of employment on the benefits the member might receive.

The Laurie Mitchell Center is a past recipient of the New Freedom Initiative Award given by the U.S. Department of Labor in recognition of its pioneering and innovative work to increase employment opportunities for individuals who experience a disability.

You can find more information about Laurie Mitchell at this weblink:

<http://www.lmec.org/home0.aspx>

Oasis Peer Support and Resource Center (PSRC)

81840 Avenue 46, Suite 107

Indio, CA 92201

(760) 238.5980

PSRC is located in the Harmony Center in Indio, CA, and it is one of three programs which operate out of the Harmony Center location, all of the programs focused on different aspects of mental health services for individuals who experience mental health issues.

PSRC itself, as well as being peer-run, has as its primary focus the provision of necessary skills and training so that peers can live successfully in their communities of choice. A big part of the work of PSRC, then, is specifically on employment-related activities. The employment-related activities include classes to train members on how to use popular computer software programs so as to help them boost their employment possibilities, assistance in job searches, outreach to employers to identify job openings in the PSRC service areas, and assistance in preparing resumes, cover letters, and mock interviews to prepare for an actual job interview itself.

PSRC provides services both for the adult peer community and the Youth in Transition communities in the desert region of Riverside County in California. Its services are available at three different locations throughout this region: the cities of Banning, Blyth, and Indio.

Recovery Innovations, Inc.

Central Office: 2701 N. 16th St., Suite 316

Phoenix, AZ

(602) 650.1212

Recovery Innovations (RI) is an anomaly in this list of groups/organizations because it is neither a peer group nor a peer organization. It is, instead, a multi-state business which specializes in, as its name implies, innovations in recovery-based practices in both the mental health and substance abuse fields. RI currently has operations in Arizona, California, Washington State, North Carolina, and will soon be initiating activities in Delaware as well.

The reason why we have included them in this list of groups/organizations that provide employment-related supports and services is that Recovery Innovations (in its previous iteration as META Services of Maricopa County in Arizona) was a trailblazer in both fully integrating mental health peers in all aspects of mental health services delivery, and demonstrating, through its results, that such an effort could have a noticeably positive impact on recovery-based outcomes. META provided extensive training to peers so that they could work in a Peer Support Specialist role on all of META's service teams. This effort continues today. Today, in RI's operations in Arizona alone, a full 70% of RI's Arizona workforce is Peer Support Specialists who work on RI's service teams in the state.

As well as providing training to peers so they can become members of the behavioral health workforce, within RI and elsewhere, RI also provides direct services to peers in their service areas. Individuals who are registered with RI for their mental health services can access training, career planning assistance, placement assistance and employment support services through them.

Each of the RI states maintains its own website which details all of the specific services provided by RI in that state and where in the state they are provided. You can access the general RI website by using this weblink:

<http://www.recoveryinnovations.org/index.html>

Then click on the "Our Services" button on the far right side of the main RI website home page to be taken to a map on which you can click on each of the different states in which RI is currently providing services to access that individual state's RI website.

The Village

Mental Health America of Los Angeles (MHALA) Program Activity
(MHALA Headquarters)
100 W. Broadway, Suite 5010
Long Beach, CA 90802
(562) 285.1330

The Village is one of several programs run in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area by Mental Health America of Los Angeles. The Village itself is located in Long Beach, California, and it provides multiple services to individuals who access mental health services from it, including employment-related supports and services. The teams which provide services to individuals who access services from The Village consist of peers and non-peers working side-by-side on those teams. This includes the employment-focused teams.

In its employment efforts, The Village focuses on encouraging individuals to engage with employment at a level which they feel best suits them. Thus, The Village's employment services consist of a "menu" of different possible services running from The Village's "Work For A Day" program which gives an individual an opportunity to commit

to nothing more than one day's work with payment for that work guaranteed at the end of the day, temporary work programs in which an individual agrees to a job for a fixed, limited period at an agreed rate of pay, and more extensive and detailed employment support services which can help an individual secure a competitive job of his/her choosing which pays at market rates for that particular type of job.

You can find more information about The Village at this weblink:

<http://www.mhala.org/mha-village.htm>