



# Preparing Certified Peer Specialist to Work Effectively with Individuals on their Recovery Journey

Presented by

Sheryl Newton MLR, CPS, FPS, ALWF

Sheila Hall-Prioleau MS, CPS, FPS, ALWF

# Overview

- ▶ Introductions and definitions
- ▶ Information on United Peers' piloted Internship program
- ▶ Challenges and possible solutions for mental health peer specialist career development
- ▶ FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) Grant for mental health peer specialist staff
- ▶ Contact Information
- ▶ Questions & Answers

# What is RHD?

Resources for Human Development is a large human services organization that services 14 states with 160 programs.

# What is United Peers?

## United Peers

Is a **Mental Health Recovery Center**  
located in Philadelphia's East Falls section.  
It is staffed entirely by **Certified Peer Specialists**.

# What is a Certified Peer Specialist in Pennsylvania?

- ▶ An individual with lived experience with a mental health challenge or co-occurring disorder
- ▶ The individual receives a two-week training provided by Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHIDS) and the Mental Health Partners.

# United Peers' Internship

- ▶ United Peers Mental Health Recovery Center piloted an Internship program for Certified Peer Specialists.
- ▶ The internship paired classroom instruction and on-the-job training in order to prepare new CPS graduates the necessary skills to be successful.
- ▶ The program focused on five areas of skill improvement, and it consisted of 17 volunteer CPS.

# United Peers' Behavioral Health Interns

- ▶ United Peers also developed an internship program for college students working on degrees in Social Work or Human Services.
- ▶ This training program consisted of 6 interns from colleges around the Philadelphia area.

# Rationale for the Internship Program

The main reason for the CPS internship program at United Peers was the need in RHD for skilled CPS staff for various units.

- ▶ We noticed challenges in hiring CPS staff that were able to remain successfully employed.
- ▶ We identified five areas in need of improvement and created trainings to support skill development and increase ability to be hired.



# Five Internship Focus Areas

1. Documentation
2. Professionalism & Boundaries
3. Behavioral Health Education
4. Self-Care & Personal Wellness
5. Communication



**Focus**

# Documentation

## Challenges

- ▶ Little or no computer skills or inability to learn the Electronic Health Record system
- ▶ Basic literacy skills and poor writing skills
- ▶ Contact notes were not meeting recovery plan goals and funder expectations.
- ▶ Late documentation
- ▶ Need to expand vocabulary

# Documentation

## Possible Solutions

- ▶ Offer basic computer skills trainings and training on EHR.
- ▶ Suggest reading and writing courses.
- ▶ Provide trainings, supervision, and coaching on documentation.
- ▶ Give goal planning and recovery plan training. Limit domains to focus on: Socialization, Living, Learning, and Working.
- ▶ Offer support with time management and supervision.
- ▶ Provide word list, feelings list, and other resources.

# Professionalism & Boundaries

## Challenges

- ▶ Inappropriate relationships with participants
- ▶ Arriving to work to late
- ▶ Cell phone use
- ▶ Taking unauthorized breaks
- ▶ Constant call outs or excessive absenteeism
- ▶ Over identify with participants
- ▶ Use of deficit language
- ▶ Inability to work on a team
- ▶ Telling inappropriate jokes or use of vulgar language
- ▶ Arguing versus advocating
- ▶ Not performing the essential functions of the job



# Professionalism & Boundaries

## Possible Solutions

- ▶ Have a conversation before things get out of hand.
- ▶ Remind them that everyone's recovery is different.
- ▶ Provide recovery transformation training on the power of language.
- ▶ Give opportunities for team building exercises and training.
- ▶ Include boundary questions in interviews & boundary training.
- ▶ Have clear policies and a code of ethics form to be signed upon hire.

# Professionalism & Boundaries

## Possible Solutions

- ▶ Address in supervision to try to find out why and work on solutions together.
- ▶ Communicate clear expectations for performance while working.
- ▶ Provide training on appropriate language.
- ▶ Go over the Policy and Procedures of the organization
- ▶ Go over the job description when hired and at supervisions.
- ▶ Support work-life balance

# Behavioral Health Education

## Challenges

- ▶ Crisis management
- ▶ Lack of knowledge of Mental Health challenges and symptoms (other than their own)
- ▶ Lack of knowledge of the Recovery model
- ▶ Engagement Skills
- ▶ Lack of knowledge of Trauma

# Behavioral Health Education



## Possible Solutions

- ▶ Crisis management training, Mental Health First aid, Suicide prevention, etc.
- ▶ Case consultation, Introduction to Mental Health training
- ▶ Trainings on Principles of Recovery, Person centered training, Intro to Recovery way of thinking
- ▶ Motivational Interviewing training, Stages of change , modeling, treating people like you want to be treated.
- ▶ Trauma informed trainings, workshops, webinars



# Self-Care & Personal Wellness

## Challenges

- ▶ Missed doctor and therapy appointments
- ▶ Compassion fatigue
- ▶ No work life balance
- ▶ Bringing outside issues to work
- ▶ Not taking time off when they are sick or when things are breaking down
- ▶ No outside support system and relying on staff and participants for supports



# Self-Care & Personal Wellness

## Possible Solutions

- ▶ Give time off and encourage them to speak to supervisor for time off as needed.
- ▶ Include stress reduction activities during staff meetings and encourage vacations and mental health days.
- ▶ Support with time management planning or a work WRAP.
- ▶ Daily check-in with staff.
- ▶ Send them home when they are feeling unwell and encourage them to seek professional help.
- ▶ Explain the importance of having a support system outside of work and refer back to principles of recovery and personal WRAP plans.

# Communication

## Challenges

- ▶ Issues effectively communicating with program administration and supervisors
- ▶ Fellow co- workers
- ▶ Stakeholders
- ▶ Self Advocacy

# Communication

## Possible Solutions

- ▶ Do regular strength based supervisions and coaching
- ▶ Include team building exercises during staff meetings
  - Do morning check in's (e.g. Sanctuary Check In models are great)
- ▶ Include CPS staff in funder and stakeholder meetings
- ▶ Create a safe and open environment that allows for active listening and communication

# Recruitment of Interns

- ▶ After looking at the challenges and solutions, the next step was to recruit CPS volunteers.
- ▶ We recruited them from the following sources:
  - ▶ DBHIDS- Richard Drain and Kenny Briggs
  - ▶ CPS Networking Meeting
  - ▶ Participants from United Peers - who completed the CPS training



# Internship Training

## Hands on training

- ▶ Group Facilitation training
  - ▶ Group creation
  - ▶ Lesson plan development
- ▶ One-on-One participant Engagement
  - ▶ De-escalation strategies
- ▶ Documentation
  - ▶ Contact Notes
  - ▶ Individual Recovery Plans

# Internship Training

## Classroom Training

- ▶ Mental Health First Aid
- ▶ Managing Suicidal Behavior
- ▶ Introduction to Mental Illness
- ▶ WRAP Seminar II
- ▶ Crisis Intervention
- ▶ Confidentiality & HIPPA
- ▶ CPR & First Aid
- ▶ Self-care and wellness training

# Employment Matching Volunteers

- ▶ 5 of 17 CPS were placed in RHD programs
  - ▶ S.A.L.T. Supported Adult Living Team
  - ▶ Costar
  - ▶ Kalio Haven (Safe Haven)
  - ▶ LaCasa (Safe Haven)
  - ▶ United Peers (Mental Health Recovery Center)
- ▶ 7 CPS were hired in other organizations
  - ▶ MHP - Mental Health Partners (2 CPS)
  - ▶ COHMAR (1 CPS)





# Employment Matching Volunteers

- ▶ The Wedge (1 CPS)
- ▶ DBHIDS - Department of Behavioral Health (1 CPS)
- ▶ 2 CPS went into other fields
- ▶ 1 CPS is still at United Peers providing WRAP groups
- ▶ 1 CPS went to college
- ▶ 3 CPS are still unemployed

# College Interns Placement

- ▶ 2 College Interns were employed at RHD.
- ▶ 3 College interns were employed in different companies.
- ▶ 1 College Intern is still attending college.

# Technical Support

- ▶ CPS Support Groups once a month
- ▶ Meetings with Supervisor if necessary
- ▶ Additional trainings for the newly hired CPS
- ▶ Monthly coaching, if needed by the CPS
- ▶ On-the-job coaching, if needed
- ▶ Telephone support



# UMOJA/Unity Initiative

Past - May 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31, 2015

## Funding

- ▶ Emergency Food and Shelter (EFSP) - Phase 32
- ▶ Funds made available by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and activities administered by United Way
- ▶ Amount: \$50,000

# UMOJA - Program Summary

## Design First Year

RHD utilized the EFSP grant to transform RHD's Safe Haven System into a trauma-informed environment using the evidence based Sanctuary model. The overall goal is to better support residents in their recovery journey and pursuit of permanent housing.

# UMOJA - Program Summary Continued

## Design First Year

Certified Peer Specialists (CPS) were employed to provide the following supports and engagement: individual advocacy of the person's choosing; crisis management supports; and skills training.



# UMOJA Initiative

## Data First Year

- ▶ 4 CPS were employed and placed in 2 RHD residential programs (Shelter Safe Havens).
- ▶ CPS Placement Sites:
  - ▶ A.) 2 Male CPS - La Casa Safe Haven - (10 male youths)
  - ▶ B.) 2 Female CPS - Cedar Park Safe Haven - (22 female adults)

# Employment After UMJOA

## Data First Year

- ▶ 4 CPS employed 100%
  - ▶ 1 CPS employed full time at Team ARRIVE - RHD
  - ▶ 1 CPS employed full time at La Casa Safe Haven - RHD
  - ▶ 1 CPS employed part time at La Casa Safe Haven - RHD
  - ▶ 1 CPS employed part time at United Peers - RHD



# UMOJA/Unity Initiative

July 1<sup>st</sup> through December 2017

## Funding

- ▶ Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) - Phase 33
- ▶ Funds made available by FEMA, and activities administered by Catholic Social Services Archdiocese of Philadelphia
- ▶ Amount: \$50,000



# UMOJA - Program Summary

## Design Second Year

RHD utilized the EFSP grant to support RHD's Philadelphia Behavioral Health and Housing Division through CPS engagement. CPS would be utilized in permanent and mobile placement capacities.

# UMOJA - Program Summary Continued

## Data Second Year

- ▶ 6 CPS were employed and placed at various RHD programs.
- ▶ Placement:
  - ▶ A.) 2 CPS placed at La Casa Safe Haven (10 male youths)
  - ▶ B.) 1 CPS placed at Cedar Park Safe Haven (22 females)
  - ▶ C.) 1 CPS placed at United Peers
  - ▶ D.) 1 mobile CPS, currently placed at Misty Harbor
  - ▶ E.) 1 mobile CPS, currently placed at Opportunity Place

# Employment After UMJOA

## Data Second Year

- ▶ 3 out of the 6 CPS were employed 50%.
  - ▶ A.) 3 CPS employed at RHD.
  - ▶ B.) 1 CPS was pending full time employment due to driver's license challenges.
  - ▶ C.) 1 CPS declined employment due to SSI restrictions.
  - ▶ D.) 1 CPS was not employed.

# UMOJA/Unity Initiative

September through January 2018

## Funding

- ▶ Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) -
- ▶ Funds made available by FEMA, and activities administered by Catholic Social Services Archdiocese of Philadelphia
- ▶ Amount: \$50,000

# UMOJA - Program Summary

## Design Third Year

RHD utilized the EFSP grant to support RHD's Philadelphia Behavioral Health and Housing Division through CPS engagement. CPS' would be utilized in permanent and mobile placement capacities.

# UMOJA - Program Summary Continued

## Data Third Year

- ▶ 10 CPS were employed and placed at various RHD programs.
- ▶ Placement:
  - ▶ A.) La Casa
  - ▶ B.) Opportunity Place
  - ▶ C.) Cedar Park
  - ▶ D.) Progress Haven

# UMOJA - Program Summary Continued

## Data Third Year

- ▶ Placement:
  - ▶ E.) United Peers
  - ▶ F.) SALT
  - ▶ G.) CoStar



# Employment After UMJOA

## Data Third Year

- ▶ 9 out of the 10 CPS were employed 90%.
  - ▶ A.) 3 CPS employed at Opportunity Place.
  - ▶ B.) 1 CPS employed at Cedar Park.
  - ▶ C.) 1 CPS employed at Progress Haven.
  - ▶ D.) 2 CPS employed at United Peers.
  - ▶ E.) 1 CPS employed at CoStar.
  - ▶ F.) 1 CPS employed at Kalio Haven.

# CPS Numbers for United Peers

- ▶ 15 CPS employed by United Peers
- ▶ 17 CPS volunteers
  - ▶ 1 CPS was employed at United Peers
- ▶ 6 College Interns
  - ▶ 1 CPS/College Intern employed at United Peers
- ▶ 38 total individuals of which 29 are employed

# UMOJA Numbers

- ▶ 20 CPS over 3 years
- ▶ 16 CPS employed
- ▶ UMOJA has an 80% employment rate over 3 years.

# Contact Information



Sheila Hall-Prioleau

Sheryl Newton

Phone number

267-639-3394

Phone number

267-639-3394

Email

[Sheila.hallprioleau@rhd.org](mailto:Sheila.hallprioleau@rhd.org)

Email

[Sheryl.newton@rhd.org](mailto:Sheryl.newton@rhd.org)

# Questions

