

An Introduction to Peer Support Whole Health & Resiliency Training

Peer Support Whole Health & Resiliency is a person-centered planning process that:

- 1) looks comprehensively at a person's health and resiliency life-style;
- 2) is a strength-based and focuses on a person's, interests and natural supports;
- 3) stresses creating new health behaviors and strengthening one's resiliency skills; and
- 4) provides peer support delivered by peer specialists to promote self-directed whole health.

The Peer Support Whole Health (PSWHR) training was originally developed by Appalachian Consulting Group (ACG) and the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network (GMHCN) as part of a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funded National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) Technology Transfer Initiative (TTI) grant awarded Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. Some of the tools are adapted from the Health and Recovery Peer Project (HARP) based on the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program developed at Stanford University and the Relaxation Response from the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind-Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital. Since the original course creation, ACG has added additional resiliency factors as developed by Dr. Gregory Fricchione of the Benson-Henry Institute.

The purpose of the two-day training is to provide peer specialists with the skills needed to help another peer set, get and keep a whole health/resiliency goal. PSWHR is emerging as an exciting new role for peer specialists that clarifies how they promote self-directed whole health and resiliency that is transforming mental health systems.

The PSWHR training is built on three beliefs.

- 1) People cannot be forced or coerced to change their unhealthy life-style habits or learn new skills; therefore participation in the PSWHR training needs to be on a voluntary basis and participants acknowledge that they have health and resiliency issues that they are thinking about dealing with.
- 2) People are more likely to create a healthier, more resilient life-style when you focus on their interests, strengths, supports and what they see as possible; therefore the PSWHR training helps people focus on what they want to create in their lives, not on what they may need to change.
- 3) People find it easier to create new habits than to change or stop old habits; therefore the PSWHR training focuses on creating new behaviors and skills on a weekly basis, monitoring how well they are doing and accepting support from their peers.

The PSWHR training is also built on a Person Centered Planning (PCP) process that focuses on ten health life-style domains and five keys to success.

The ten domains are:

- 1) Healthy Eating
- 2) Physical Activity
- 3) Restful Sleep
- 4) Stress Management
- 5) Service to Others
- 6) Support Network
- 7) Optimism Based on Positive Expectations
- 8) Cognitive Skills to Avoid Negative Thinking
- 9) Meaning and Purpose
- 10) Spirituality

The Five Keys to Success are:

- 1) A Person-Centered Goal that uses the IMPACT process to be written into a treatment plan
- 2) A Weekly Action Plan that uses a confidence scale
- 3) A Daily/Weekly Personal Log
- 4) Peer Accountability and Support
- 5) Weekly Peer Support Whole Health Group