



Northwest (HHS Region 10)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Advanced Topics in Strengthening Youth/ Young Adult Peer Support

Clarifying the Youth Peer Support Role

October 22, 2020

In collaboration with Pathways Research and Training Center

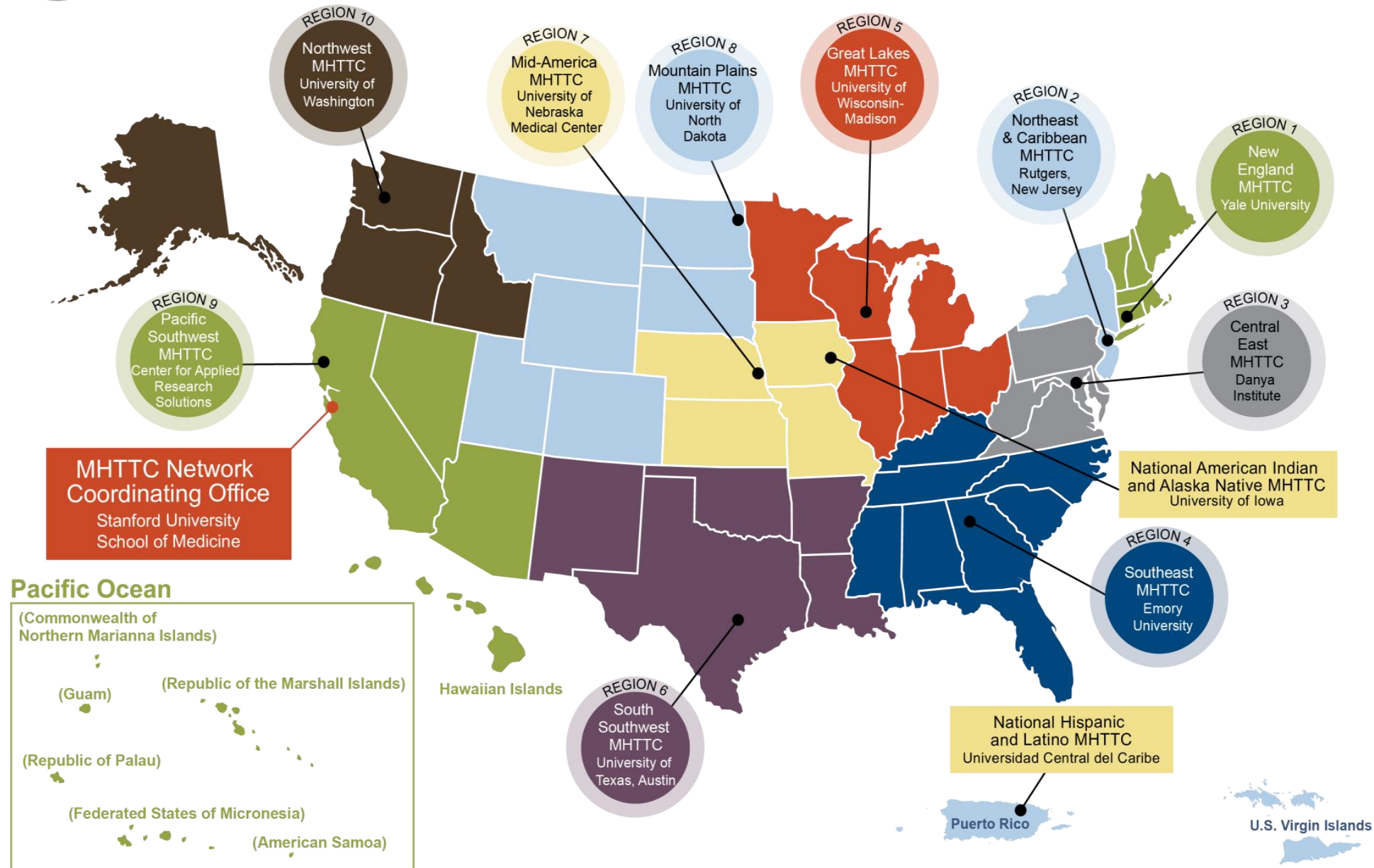




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Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

MHTTC Network



About the Northwest MHTTC



Lydia Chwastiak, MD, MPH
PI and Co-Director



Christina Clayton, LICSW, CDP
Co-Director

**The Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC) Network
is about technology transfer.**

*We disseminate and implement evidence-based practices for
mental disorders into our field.*

Our target workforce includes:

*behavioral health and primary care providers, school and social
service staff, and others whose work has the potential to improve
behavioral health outcomes for individuals with or at risk of
developing serious mental illnesses.*

PROUDLY SERVING
ALASKA, IDAHO, OREGON & WASHINGTON



Northwest (HHS Region 10)

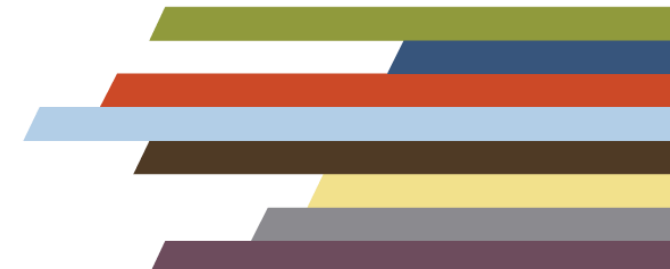
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UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
PSYCHIATRY & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
School of Medicine

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration



Northwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

Our Role:

Provide training and technical assistance (TA) in evidence-based practices (EBPs) to behavioral health and primary care providers, and school and social service staff whose work has the potential to improve behavioral health outcomes for individuals with or at risk of developing serious mental illness in SAMHSA's Region 10 (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington).

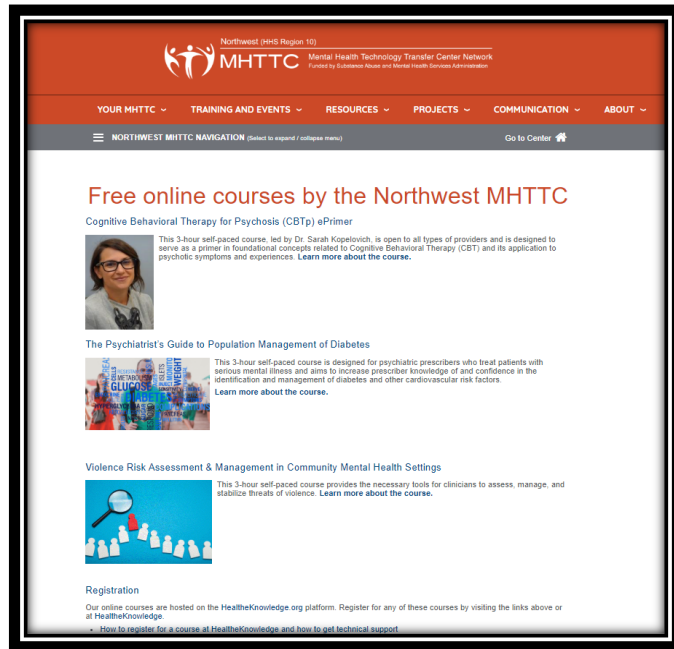
Our Goals:

- Accelerate the adoption and implementation of mental health related evidence-based practices including area of focus (EBPs for serious mental health issues) across Region 10
- Heighten the awareness, knowledge, and skills of the workforce that addresses the needs of individuals with serious mental health issues in Region 10
- Foster alliances among culturally diverse practitioners, researchers, policy makers, family members, and consumers of mental health services
- Ensure the availability and delivery of publicly available, free of charge, training and technical assistance to the mental health workforce in Region 10



About the Northwest MHTTC

Online Courses



Northwest (HHS Region 10) MHTTC Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

YOUR MHTTC TRAINING AND EVENTS RESOURCES PROJECTS COMMUNICATION ABOUT

NORTHWEST MHTTC NAVIGATION (select to expand / collapse menu) Go to Center

Free online courses by the Northwest MHTTC

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Psychosis (CBTp) ePrimer

This 3-hour self-paced course, led by Dr. Sarah Kopelowich, is open to all types of providers and is designed to serve as a primer in foundational concepts related to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and its application to psychotic symptoms and experiences. [Learn more about the course.](#)

The Psychiatrist's Guide to Population Management of Diabetes

This 3-hour self-paced course is designed for psychiatric prescribers who treat patients with serious mental illness and aims to increase prescriber knowledge of and confidence in the identification and management of diabetes and other cardiovascular risk factors. [Learn more about the course.](#)

Violence Risk Assessment & Management in Community Mental Health Settings

This 3-hour self-paced course provides the necessary tools for clinicians to assess, manage, and stabilize threats of violence. [Learn more about the course.](#)

Registration

Our online courses are hosted on the HealthKnowledge.org platform. Register for any of these courses by visiting the links above or at HealthKnowledge.

- [How to register for a course at HealthKnowledge and how to get technical support.](#)

Research/Practice Briefs



Integrated Care for Older Adults with Serious Mental Illness and Medical Comorbidity: Evidence-Based Models and Future Research Directions

Collaborating TTC: Northwest MHTTC
Publication Date: May 29, 2019
Developed By: Northwest MHTTC

DOWNLOAD

MHP RES PES EDC

Website with Events, Products & News



NEWS

Recovery LIVE! Supporting the Resilience of Black Men: Culturally Affirming and...

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUN 09 DBT STEPS-A Online Lesson 10: Distress Tolerance - Radical Acceptance
Click here to tune into the DBT STEPS-A YouTube Channel every Tuesday and Thursday morning at 10am

JUN 11 DBT STEPS-A: Summary Q&A for Students - Putting It All Together & Preparing for Summer
Click here to tune into the DBT STEPS-A YouTube Channel every Tuesday and Thursday morning at 10am

JUN 11 Resources for Supporting the Mental Health and Well-being of Children and Families During COVID-19
Resources for Supporting the Mental Health and Well-being of Children and Families During COVID-19

PRODUCTS

Educator Wellness Webinar #4: Cultivating a Practice of Gratitude and Appreciation in Your School Community
The Northwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center and the Northwest PBIS Network are collaborating to bring you a FREE, 4-part webinar

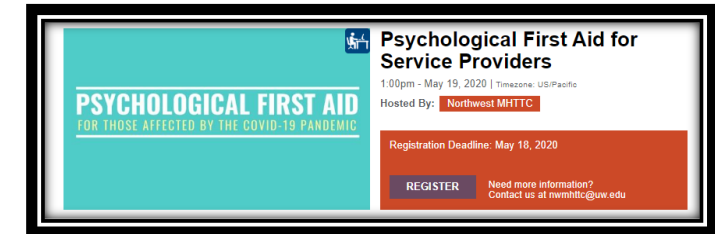
Ambiguous Loss: Grieving in the Time of COVID-19, Followed by Live Q&A Session
About this Resource: Life, as we knew it just a few weeks ago, has been completely turned upside down. That feeling you are feeling but can't

SMART Center 2020 Virtual Speaker Series - Dan Losen, JD, MEd
The school mental health supplement to the Northwest MHTTC is excited to co-sponsor the UW SMART Center's 2020 Virtual Speaker Series.

Click to add text

View All

Live Training



Psychological First Aid for Service Providers

1:00pm - May 19, 2020 | Timezone: US/Pacific
Hosted By: Northwest MHTTC

Registration Deadline: May 18, 2020

REGISTER Need more information? Contact us at nwmhttc@uw.edu

Archived Webinars



Our Archived Webinars

Best Practice Crisis Response: Supporting Youth in Crisis

Series Collections

- Integrated Care Webinar Series 2019-2020
- Supporting WA State Behavioral Health Providers to Optimize Telehealth in Response to COVID-19
- Behavioral Health Crisis Response Systems Webinar Series
- Psychological First Aid Webinar Series

Behavioral Therapy/Evidence Based Treatments

- Clinical Innovations National Series: Telehealth and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Psychosis (CBTp)
- Involving Natural Supports in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Psychosis
- Best Behavioral Skills
- Behavioral Activation
- CBT for Anxiety (CBT-A)
- DBT Distress Tolerance Skills

Cultural Considerations and Equity Topics

- Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Care for Early Psychosis

Integrated Medicine

- Psychosis in Primary Care (PACC-ECHO)
- Assessment of Psychosis and Behavioral Interventions
- Medication Management

Clinical Care

- Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder with Serious Mental Illness
- Overview of Clinical Sociology: Theories, Assessment, Interventions, and Treatments

Peer Services

- Peer Delivered Services: A Broad Exploration
- Decision Making in Your Agency: What to Consider When Working with Youth Peers
- The Parallel Process: Training Informal Considerations for Individuals and Organizations
- Retaining and Growing the Youth Peer Support Workforce
- Recruitment and Hiring for Youth Peer Support Specialists
- Supervision and Self-care for Youth Peer Support Specialists



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The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND
ACCEPTING OF
DIVERSE CULTURES,
GENDERS,
PERSPECTIVES,
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED/
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR
OWN JOURNEYS

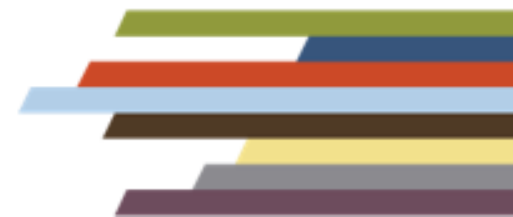
PERSON-FIRST AND
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH
OUR ACTIONS,
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

Adapted from: https://mhcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Recovery-Oriented-Language-Guide_2019ed_v1_20190809-Web.pdf



Introductions





Pathways Research and Training Center

RESEARCH & TRAINING CENTER FOR PATHWAYS TO POSITIVE FUTURES



PORTLAND, OREGON

Research, training and dissemination focused on improving outcomes for youth and young adults who experience serious mental health conditions

www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu

Logistics

- Monthly virtual meetings on the third Thursday 10-11 Pacific Time.
- Registration required *each time*.
- In order to keep the meetings discussion-based and interactive, future registration will be limited to ~30 participants.
 - Participants from the previous month will get first notice to sign up for the next month.
- If you are unable to attend, notify PSU within **48 hours of the call** so staff can offer your spot to someone on the waitlist.
 - If participants fail to do this, their spot will be forfeited to someone on the waitlist.
- Calls will be recorded and made available on the Pathways RTC website.
 - To maintain confidentiality, do not use identifying details in your questions, and submit questions with sensitive details to organizers only in the chat.
- Please share any resources, questions, topics of interest, with facilitators.
We want to cover what is important to you!

Poll: What's your role



Role Clarity: The Research

- Research has shown that there is little clarity on the youth peer support role, and often times youth peer support specialists are unclear about their job expectations.

<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/state-of-the-science-articles-2018-amp-plus>

<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/MHTTC-Supporting-Youth-Peer-Workforce.pdf>



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February 26, 2020

Practice Brief: Supporting the Youth Peer Workforce

Prepared by Marie Herman-Kritz, Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures

The Issue

Peer support is fast emerging as a promising and widely endorsed addition to the array of mental health services available to young people experiencing serious mental health conditions,¹ yet very little is known about the peer support workforce in general,² and even less about the peer workforce engaged specifically in providing services to youth and young adults.³ While the need for more research into this developing professional population is evident, what data we do have available indicates several challenges that have frequently shown up in implementing the youth peer role, as well as several common themes around what youth peer support specialists need in order to be successful in their positions.

Key Points:

- Youth peer support specialists are a rapidly emerging workforce; clarification is needed on how to define and support these roles.
- Role clarity, integration into clinical or treatment teams, a relative lack of professional experience, and difficulties surrounding career advancement are all major challenges facing youth peer support specialists.
- Organizations can mitigate these challenges with training for youth peers, training on the specific nature and value of the peer role for non-peer colleagues of youth peers, and frequent, supportive supervision.

Role Clarity: The Research

- A lack of clear understanding leads to ineffective implementation of the peer role, thus contributing to burnout and compassion fatigue.
- Youth peer support specialists should not only understand the purpose of their role, but **specific responsibilities, tasks, and techniques for engaging youth**.
- When the role is clear, PSSs and supervisors will have a shared view of what, why and how. This will allow reliable quality assurance/fidelity assessment and high-quality supervision.
- Supervisors of youth peer support specialists should ensure this through training, coaching, and instruction of their youth peer staff.

Discussion: What are some of the primary responsibilities of your youth peer support staff?

Providing Role Clarity

- Agencies should have a clear definition of what youth peer supports do and don't do.
- Misconceptions about the role include: youth peers are “role models,” babysitters, or will tattletale on the youth.

<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/proj-5-AMP-what-is-peer-support.pdf>

What Is Peer Support and What Is NOT Peer Support?



What's a Youth Peer Support Specialist?

A youth peer support specialist (YPSS) works with young people transitioning to adulthood, who are usually involved in a child-serving system (e.g., foster care, mental health) or experiencing a unique challenge. YPSSs are typically close in age with the young people they work with. YPSSs use their own lived experience with mental health and child-serving systems to relate and engage with the youth they serve. In their work together, YPSSs help youth to identify goals and advocate for themselves. YPSSs achieve this through the following strategies:



Building Hope

YPSSs use their lived experience to relate to the young people they are working with and show them that there is hope for a brighter future, even if things seem bleak in the present. Lived experience refers to a person's journey through a system, trauma, or unique challenge that a young person might relate to. The purpose of sharing one's lived experience is to empathize, relate, and inspire hope. When talking about their lived experience, YPSSs are very intentional about how and what they share (see strategic sharing definition on the next page) so as to not discourage, overshadow, or mislead a young person. It is also important for the YPSS to remember that they are not a superhero, and are not expected to be a perfect role model or example of “what to do” for a young person. Rather, the YPSS can normalize feelings, thoughts, or situations that the young person might be experiencing so the young person feels less alone or alienated by what they might be going through or experiencing.



<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/proj-5-AMP-what-is-peer-support.pdf>

Providing Role Clarity

- Clear job description that defines the role of a youth peer support specialist and outlines qualifications and tasks.
- A required qualification is lived experience. Your agency should specify what lived experience is required. Ex: “Your lived experience should include involvement with mental health and/or substance abuse treatment...”
- Provide on-going training and coaching on how youth peer support specialists should be engaging with youth clients

Discussion: What are some specific ways youth peer support specialists should support their youth?

Poll: Agency Model

- There are a number of different models that use peer support.
- It is important that supervisors within your agency understand the details of the youth peer support role.
 - Without this understanding, supervision is unclear and leads to burnout.
 - If supervisors do not have personal experience as a youth peer support specialist they may want to seek coaching or guidance from those who do.

Training and Coaching

Discussion: What on-going training and coaching does your agency provide?

- Youth peer support specialists should have ongoing training and coaching in order to understand how to do their job effectively.
- Many trainings provide information on what the role is, but not how to effectively enact it.
- Coaching and supervision should include focus on specific youth-driven techniques and professional development.
- This is hard to achieve without the observation of practice.

What do Youth Peer Support Specialists do?



Building Hope

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Strategic Sharing*

When a YPSS talks about their lived experience, they only share parts of their story that are relevant to the young person, and do so in a way that helps to advocate with and/or for the youth, make them feel like they are not alone, or show them that there is hope. The YPSS is careful not to share unnecessary parts of their story or share in such a way where they monopolize the conversation or divert attention from the youth and their goals. The YPSS also needs to be conscientious of their own triggers and vulnerabilities while sharing their story, and should ensure that they take care of themselves as this can be sensitive. Doing strategic sharing well is not easy and can be tricky.



**Strategic Sharing: As a peer support specialist, you should learn about this in depth at your peer delivered services certification training. See the Strategic Sharing Workbook: Youth Voice in Advocacy, which is available for free download at the Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures: <https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/pbStrategicSharingGuide.pdf>*

Discussion

- What are some ways youth peer supports can help build hope without the pressure of being labeled a “role model?”



What do Youth Peer Support Specialists do?



Affirmation

The YPSS helps young people identify their goals, and offers validation. They affirm the young person's goals and ideas by helping them explore the situation, identify a plan, and come up with action steps. The YPSS consistently checks in about goals and plans, and affirms the youth's perspective by supporting them to pursue and/or change their goals.



Relationship Building

The YPSS builds relationships with youth through rapport building. This includes tapping into their *peerness** by relating to youth culture; talking with the youth one on one; learning about the youth's interests, goals and experiences; sharing parts of their own story; and (most importantly) listening to the youth and affirming their voice. By building a healthy relationship with a young person, the YPSS is helping them gain skills to build and maintain new relationships in life. Furthermore, by building a trusting relationship, the YPSS is able to help the youth identify their strengths and use those as tools to meet their needs and accomplish their goals.

**Peerness: YPSSs are usually peers or near peers, meaning that they are the same age or near the same age of the young people they work with. This allows them to share their "peerness" and engage in conversations around youth culture and have similar knowledge and experience with things like media, pop culture, technology, etc.*

Destigmatization

Young people who have been involved in systems often internalize stigmatizing beliefs about themselves. By normalizing the youth's feelings and sharing some of their own struggles and successes, the YPSS helps to challenge these stigmatizing labels and assumptions about young people who have systems experience. YPSSs also serve as advocates within their communities, and thus work to destigmatize mental health challenges and system experience in the public arena.





Discussion

How can you support youth peer support specialist in maintaining a clear role with their youth?

...Be their friend

YPSSs build unique relationships with youth that are built on trust and mutual respect, but there are clear boundaries in place that allow them to work on specific goals. While YPSSs are friendly (because duh), they are still mandatory reporters, professionals, and have a code of ethics they are expected to abide by. YPSSs work with young people to help them build healthy social skills and connect to the community so they can build long lasting friendships of their own.



...Be a superhero (but you can wear a cape)

YPSSs often work with young people experiencing crisis. While a YPSS should have some crisis intervention training, they should not be the only resource for a youth in crisis, nor should they be expected to be able to respond to or handle every crisis situation. YPSSs can help youth create a safety plan to help prevent crisis, and should debrief crisis situations with youth, but they should not be expected to serve as on-call crisis response support. YPSSs should also not be expected to represent perfection, have all of the answers or be seen without flaws; rather they should demonstrate that recovery is an ongoing process and normalize this for the young people they work with.

...Be their therapist

YPSSs help youth through difficult situations, and through relationship building speak with youth about difficult topics and feelings. While there may be a therapeutic element to their role, it is important to remember that YPSSs do not have a professional clinical background and should not be making clinical decisions for the young person. Instead, they should be helping the youth to identify and connect with resources that may work for them (clinical or not) and working with them to identify goals and strategies for achieving their goals.

What Youth Peer Supports Don't Do



Discussion

- What are some other things youth peer support specialists are expected to do that are NOT within their role?

Poll

How confident are you
that your agency
provides adequate role
clarity?

Wrap-up



Please write any ideas you have for upcoming topics in the chat



Please email or chat us if you are interested in being a recurring participant



Are there any final questions or comments?



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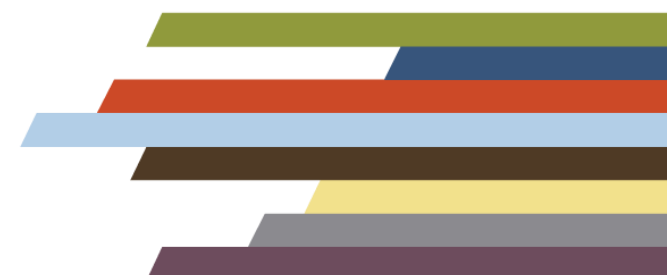
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After today's session, please complete the evaluation survey

- Will be shared in the chat box
- Helps our team plan future sessions as well as evaluate today's session

➤ *There will NOT be certificates or CEUs offered for today's session*

www.mhttcnetwork.org/northwest



Your Feedback is Important:

Post-event surveys are *critical* to our work!

- Please complete the confidential evaluation by following the link that will be emailed to you.
- Evaluation data is necessary for continued funding to offer programs

Your feedback helps us to improve and develop future programming.

We greatly appreciate your feedback!

Please complete the survey below.

Thank you!

Page 1 of 3

Participants - Please Write Your Unique Personal Code Here as Follows:

1) First Letter of Mother's First Name
2) First Letter of Mother's Maiden Name
3) First Digit of Social Security Number
4) Last Digit of Social Security Number

* must provide value

Please select the date of the meeting you attended.

* must provide value

What U.S. state or territory do you live in?

* must provide value

Burden Statement: This information is being collected to assist the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for the purpose of program monitoring of the Technology Transfer Centers (TTC) Network Program. This voluntary information collected will be used at an aggregate level to determine the reach, consistency, and quality of the TTC Program. Under the Privacy Act of 1974 any personally identifying information obtained will be kept private to the extent of the law. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The OMB control number for this project is 0930-0383. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average less than 10 minutes per encounter, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to SAMHSA Reports Clearance Officer, 5600 Fishers Ln, Room 15 E57B, Rockville, MD 20857.

What is your gender?

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Transgender
☐ None of these

reset

What is your race? (Select one or more):

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ Asian
☐ Black or African American
☐ Hispanic or Latino
☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
☐ White

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New online training

Resources & Research Updates



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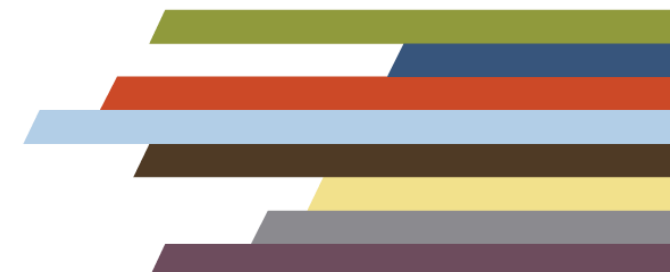
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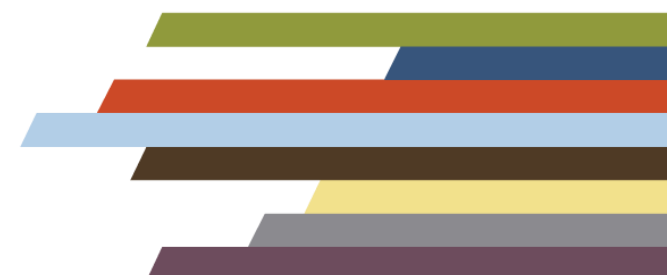
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Support and Disclaimer

This work is supported by grant SM 081721 from the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.



Thank You!



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