



# 32nd USF Child, Adolescent, and Young Adult Mental Health Conference

RESEARCH & TRAINING CENTER FOR PATHWAYS TO POSITIVE FUTURES



## Peer & Non-Peer Transition Support Providers' Training Needs

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# Presentation Objectives

Participants will:

- Consider the processes, advantages, and challenges of engaging in participatory action research.
- Learn about the similarities and differences in peer and non-peer service providers' self-reported needs for additional learning to provide effective services to youth in the transition years (14-29).
- Consider peer and non-peer service providers' preferences for particular training methods and modalities.



# Partner Organizations

Pathways Transition Training Partnership was designed to increase transition service providers' competencies and skills

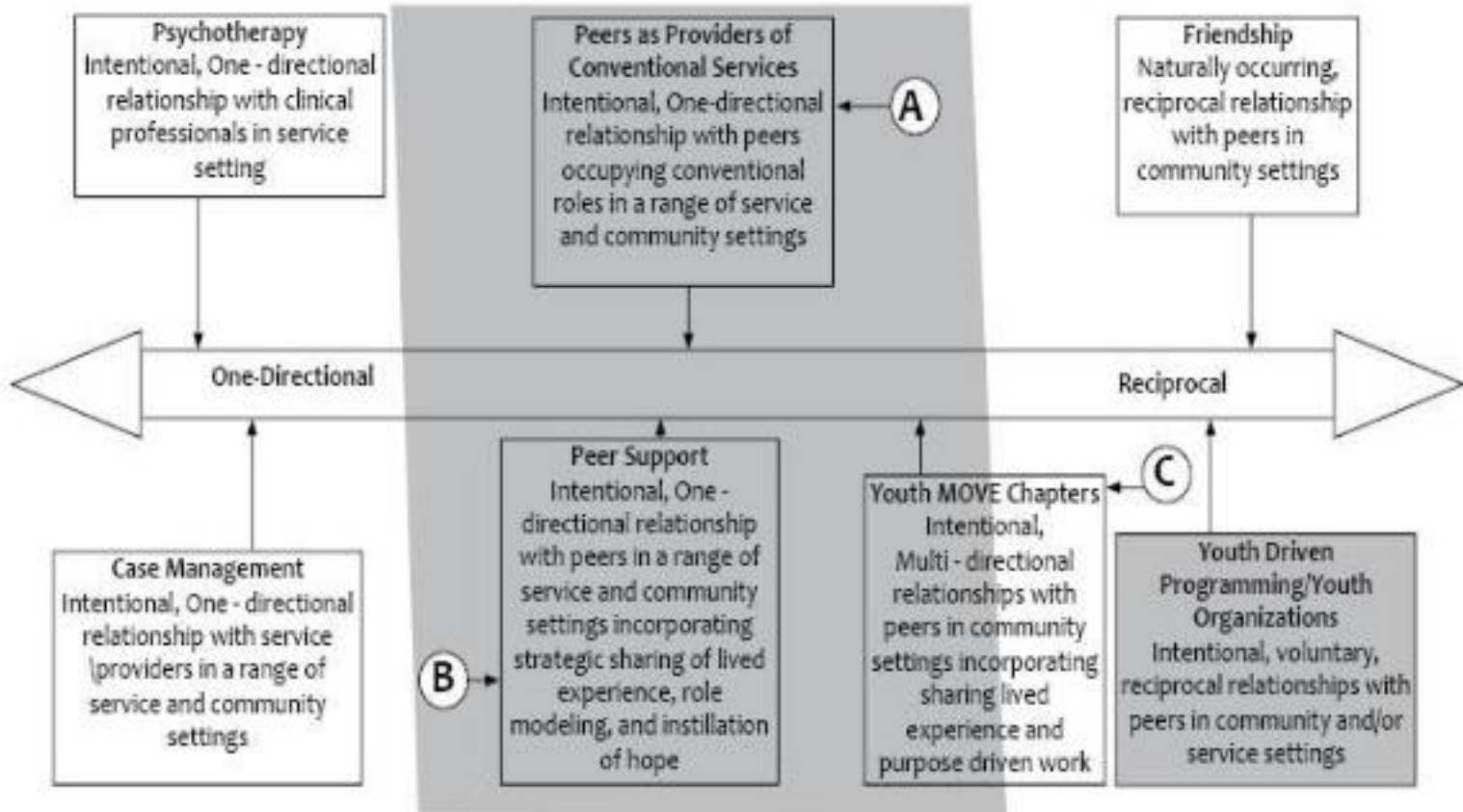
<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pathways-transition-training-partnership>

**Youth MOVE National** is a youth-driven, chapter-membership organization dedicated to improving services and systems that serve youth, such as mental health, juvenile justice, education, and child welfare.



# Peer vs. Non-Peer Service Providers

## Continuum of Helping Relationships



Adapted from 'A Continuum of Helping Relationships' Davidson L et al. Schizophr Bull 2006;32:443-450



# Peer vs. Non-Peer Service Providers

**Lived Experience:** Having received services as a child, youth, or young adult (including but not limited to mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, and/or special education services); or currently or previously lived with a mental health and/or substance use disorder diagnosis.

Youth MOVE National. (2014). *Making It Work: Youth Peer Support 3 Part Webinar Series*.



# Types of Lived Experience Positions (cont'd)

**Youth Peer Provider:** A person who uses lived experience within the child serving systems and skills learned in formal training to deliver services in behavioral health settings to promote mind-body recovery and resiliency for young adults of transition age (e.g., certified peer specialist, peer support specialist, youth partner). The age range for this role is defined by the jurisdiction or organization.

Peer Providers. (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/workforce/team-members/peer-providers#who are peer providers](https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/workforce/team-members/peer-providers#who%20are%20peer%20providers))



# Types of Lived Experience Positions (cont'd)

**Youth Advocate:** A young person, typically between the ages of 15–25, who uses lived experience to educate, inform, motivate, and inspire others in an effort to create positive systems change.

**Youth Coordinator:** A person who usually works for a nonprofit, community organization, or government agency. Primary responsibilities include facilitation of youth programs that often focus on education, leadership, and personal development.

**Youth Engagement Specialist:** A person who usually work for a youth-serving organization, but may or may not work directly with young adults. Youth Engagement Specialists often design, implement, and evaluate youth programming and outreach efforts.



# Training Needs Survey: YPAR Approach

- Young adult involvement in training initiatives for service providers is believed to enhance the relevance of interventions.
- There is beginning evidence of the impacts of youth involvement on providers' attitudes toward them (Morris & Stuart, 2002; Powers & Allaman, 2012).
- Therefore, we used a youth participatory action approach (YPAR) for this national survey of transition service providers' training needs and preferences and are using results to inform training activities (Powers & Allaman, 2012).





# Collaborative Approach to Survey



In partnership, PTTP and Youth MOVE National aimed to:

- Hear from a national sample of transition service providers.
- Include young adult perspectives in the survey.

PTTP and Youth MOVE National Best Practices Committee collaborated to:

- Draft questions,
- Distribute the survey, and
- Interpret and disseminate results.



# Aims of the National Survey

- To answer the research question, "What are the training needs and preferences of service providers who serve young people with mental health difficulties?"
- To explore preferred training modalities.
- To understand the major barriers to participating in training.
- To gain findings to guide development of training resources to improve supports to young people.

Today, our focus is on similarities and differences in the **self-reported training needs and preferences of peer and non-peer support providers.**



# Methodology—Quantitative Ratings

- We used 5-point Likert-type rating scales to obtain participants' judgments about:
  - The **importance** of 9 transition competencies and 8 transition service skills needed for effective practice,
  - Their **personal needs for training** in each competency and skill.
- Participants also rated their preferences for **10 training modalities**, and the degree to which 8 possible **barriers** affected their access.



# Methodology—Qualitative Questions

- Open ended questions collected participants' views on:
  - additional needed areas of training;
  - the underserved population groups in their area, and the training they would need to better serve them;
  - skills needed by staff in their organization;
  - preferred training modalities; and,
  - barriers to training participation.



# Collaborative Process

## Transition Competency Areas

*Initial List of 10  
Competency Areas  
Proposed*



*ADDED:*  
Collaborating with  
Peer Support  
Providers

## Transition Skills

*Initial List of 10 Skill  
Areas Proposed*



*EVOLVED:*  
Increasing youth-  
driven practice in my  
organization.



# Methodology

- *Supporting You in Supporting Youth* was a cross-sectional online survey conducted in June-July, 2017.
- Collaborators and partner organizations publicized the survey and potential participants:
  - clicked on a link
  - read an introductory statement explaining the purpose of the survey.
  - if interested in participating, they clicked on a link presenting an informed consent statement.
- Survey responses were collected anonymously using Qualtrics software.



# Methodology—Participants: Similarities

- There were no significant differences between peer support providers and non-peers in gender or race and ethnicity.
- Overall, the majority described themselves as female (80.5%), and non-Hispanic White (69.8%) with smaller groups identifying as Black or African American (8.7%); Hispanic/Latino (7.9%); mixed race (5.9%); Native American (3.7%), and Asian/Pacific Islander (3.7%).
- Most participants provided mental health (58.7%), family support (55.9%), transition planning (52.8%), and/or youth advocacy services (52.4%).



# Methodology—Participants: Differences

Variables	PSP under 40 years of age	All other providers	Total
<i>N</i>	53	201	254
Median age	20-29	40-49	40-49
Mean years in transition work	6.12	14.51	12.7
Employment in urban areas	58%	49%	51%
In rural areas	42%	46%	45%

Note. PSP: Peer Support Providers



# Results: Peer and Non-Peer Support Providers' Reports of Personal Needs for Training on Transition Competencies

Competency	Peer Support Providers <40		All Other Participants		Significance
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	P value
Employing trauma informed principles to guide your work with young people	3.50	1.18	3.41	1.19	p>.05
Engaging young people effectively by understanding youth culture	3.14	1.10	3.47	1.18	p<.08†
Promoting natural supports for young people	3.32	1.19	3.37	1.22	p>.05
Using culturally-responsive practices	3.46	1.01	3.32	1.12	p>.05
Helping young people to navigate transitions	3.36	1.03	3.30	0.07	p>.05
Applying positive youth development principles in your work	3.30	1.00	3.24	1.10	p<.05
Supporting youth empowerment	3.04	1.06	3.28	1.15	p>.05
Using tech. effectively to communicate w/ youth	2.86	1.34	3.31	1.27	p<.05*
Collaborating with peer support providers	3.04	1.23	3.11	1.19	p>.05

Note. \* p < .05; † p < .10. Training need ratings range from 1 = “not at all needed” to 5 = “very much needed.”

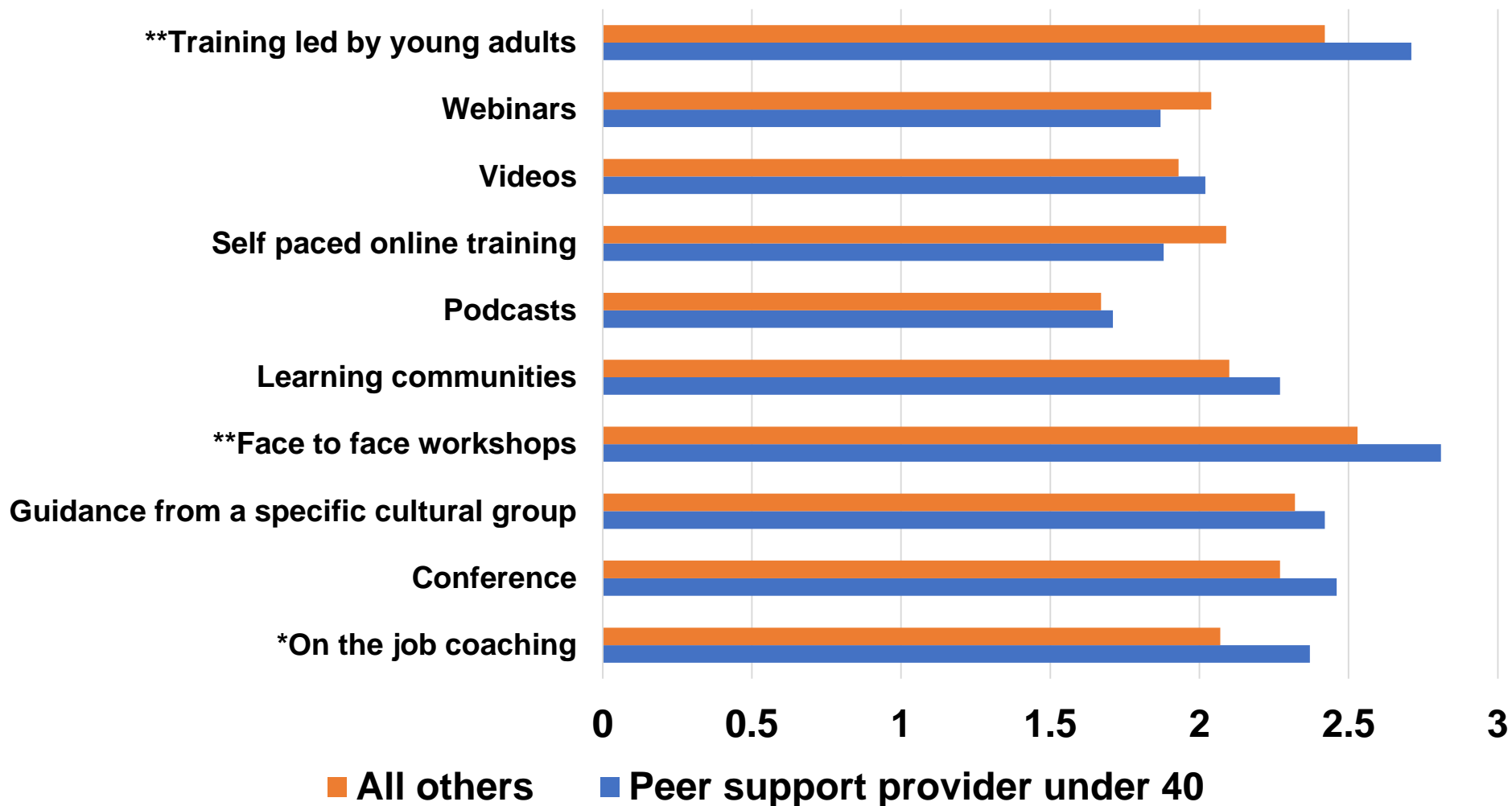
# Peer and Non-Peer Support Providers' Reports of Personal Needs for Training on Transition Skills

Skills	Peer Support Providers < 40		All Other Participants		Significance
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p-value
Increasing youth driven practice in my organization.	3.14	1.229	3.31	1.158	p>.05
Advocating for program improvements	3.50	1.147	3.29	1.196	p>.05
Supervision to support my work	3.12	1.201	2.83	1.244	p>.05
Clarifying my role interdisciplinary teams	3.08	1.158	2.89	1.253	p>.05
Responding to workplace stress by applying self-care principles	3.18	1.335	3.05	1.225	p>.05
Employing ethical principles to guide the use of technology for communication	3.04	1.207	3.20	1.203	p>.05
Supporting young adult peer support providers	3.52	1.074	3.31	1.140	p>.05
Collaborating with providers to access resources for youth	3.37	1.185	3.42	1.175	p>.05

Note: Training need ratings ranges from 1 = “not at all needed” to 5 = “very much needed.”

# Mean ratings of training modality preferences by peer support providers vs. others

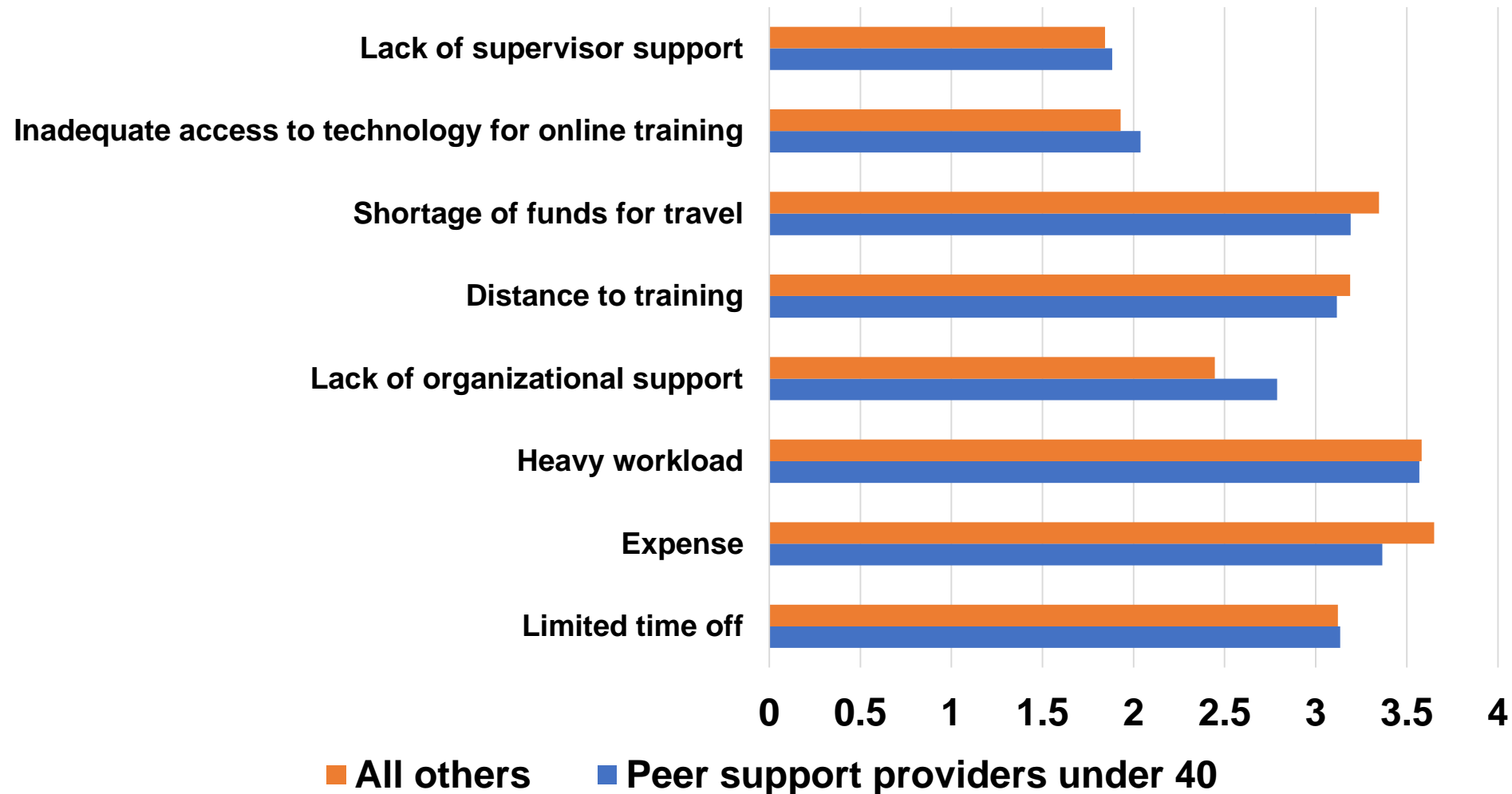
## Training Modality Preferences



Note. \* = p < .05; \*\* = p < .01.

# Mean ratings of training barriers scores by peer support providers vs. others

## Training Barriers Mean Scores



Note. Scale ranges from 1 = “none at all” to 5 = “a great deal.”



# Qualitative Findings: Similarities

- Both groups identified areas such as trauma informed care, collaboration, resource identification, and goal achievement
- Peer and non-peer providers identified similar groups of underserved young people and wanted training in:
  - Culturally responsive services, especially with youth of color, Latinx youth, LGBTQ youth.
  - Working with youth with complex needs
  - Engaging and communicating with youth,
  - Finding and accessing resources, and
  - Understanding and collaborating across systems.



# Qualitative Findings: Contrasts

Non peers were more likely to express desires for training in:

- Mental health diagnosis and specific E-B treatments
- How to encourage family support

Peer support providers were more likely to want training in:

- Increasing understanding of the peer role
- Skills for supporting individual voice, advocacy, and leadership

Peers also recommended training for other staff:

- So that organizations can better utilize peer support providers, and
- For non-peer staff to work effectively with peer support staff.



# Study Limitations

- There is no way to know how representative our sample was of the peer/non-peer support workforce for transition age youth
- We did not provide a definition of peer support or definitions of youth advocacy or other service delivery domains to people taking survey.



# Implications of Findings: Non-Peer Providers

- Future training initiatives could address areas of self-identified training priority for non-peer providers in:
  - Understanding youth culture,
  - Using technology to communicate with youth,
  - Trauma Informed Care, and
  - Culturally responsive practices.
- In response to reports by peer support providers, there appears to be a need to provide training to non-peers about the roles of peer support providers.





# Implications of Findings: Peer Providers

- Given the nature of the peer role and the relative newness of the service, it is reasonable that the peer workforce identified different training needs and preferences.
- While the peer/non-peer training need differences were non-significant, training initiatives for PSPs could incorporate responses to their expressed needs for training in areas such as:
  - Trauma informed care
  - Positive Youth Development principles
  - Culturally responsive practices, and
  - Assisting youth to navigate transitions.



# Research Support for PSP Training

- For training to be effective, the essence of “peerness” that contributes to specific preferred youth outcomes will be defined with young adult PSP input.
- Peer roles and the outcomes of PSPs’ work with youth need to be collaboratively defined and understood with young adult input (Walker, Baird, & Welch, 2018).
- Training is more effective when based specifically on young adult PSPs’ roles, needs, and developmental stages (Gopalan et al., 2017; Walker, Baird, & Welch, 2018).
- Ideally, training, coaching, and supervision are provided by people who have performed the role (Delman & Klodnick, 2017; Walker, Baird, & Welch, 2018); to meet current billing requirements, co-supervision may be an option.



# Benefits of YPAR Strategy

Collaboration between Pathways team and YMN Best Practice Committee resulted in thoughtful input that:

- Strengthened the relevance of the survey questions ,
- Enhanced wide distribution of the survey,
- Led to more accurate interpretation of findings, and
- Resulted in thoughtful plans for using the findings to guide training initiatives.

Also, BPC collaboration focused attention on the training needs and preferred training modalities of specific service provider populations at different stages of their working lives and based on the uniqueness of their roles.



# Next steps

- YMN---Survey and training initiatives
- Dissemination of survey findings via Pathways and YMN websites with goal of encouraging training organizations to use findings to guide development of training initiatives
- Responding to survey findings, the Pathways team have developed a series of ten video briefs with resource lists and discussion questions for applications to practice:  
<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pathways-transition-training-partnership#>
- Further research is needed to better understand who is the transition-focused peer and non-peer workforce, their supervisory patterns and needs, and their career pathways.



# Discussion Questions

1. What do you know about peer and non-peer service provider training needs in your area?
2. In your experience, how are the training needs of these two groups similar and different?
3. How can we increase access to on-the-job coaching and learning communities for peer and non-peer transition service providers?



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## For More Information

- Pathways Transition Training Partnership:  
<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pathways-transition-training-partnership>
- Youth MOVE National:  
<https://www.youthmovenational.org/>

