

Working Well Together

Training and Technical Assistance Center



Working Well Together Talking Points for OSHPD Regional Stakeholder Meetings on Designing the next Five Year WET Plan

Support of Funds to be Expended for Statewide Certification Efforts of Peer Support Specialists

April 3, 2013

Engagement and employment of mental health consumers, family members and parents/caregivers in the mental health workforce

- The Mental Health Services Act calls for the integration of consumers and family members at all levels of the mental health system, including as providers of services.
- This inclusion is a recognition that strictly clinical and medical model services are not sufficient to build resiliency in families and children or assist individuals to recover from mental health challenges.
- Individuals managing a mental health challenge and families supporting children and adult family members benefit from support by someone who has had a similar life experience.
- In California, there is no established statewide standard for hiring, training, supporting or defining the scope of practice for Peer Support Specialists.
- The unstructured manner in which many counties have made best efforts to integrate Peer Support Specialists into the existing workforce has resulted in loss of jobs, psychological harm to Peer Support Specialists, demoralization of the traditional workforce, a false sense of competition for jobs within the workforce.
- Current and past workforce studies have been primarily limited to evaluating the unmet needs of a workforce envisioned under a medical model and have not fully evaluated the workforce needs based upon the wellness, recovery and resiliency model.

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- Workforce Education and Training dollars should be utilized to support the statewide effort to further develop a Certification Program for Peer Support Specialist including, consumer, youth, parent, and family Peer Support Specialists including specializations in forensics and whole health.
- These monies should be used to develop a certifying body as well as certification requirements and to further develop curricula, codes of ethics, values and principles, scope of practice, training requirements, necessary supports on the job and preparing the existing workforce.
- The full inclusion of Peer Support will have the effect of increasing the diversity of the workforce.
- Monies should also be utilized to support individuals who wish to train as a Certified Peer Support Specialist to pay for training and certification.
- The full inclusion of Peer Support will have the effect of reducing stigma and discrimination with the workforce.
- We support the continued and increased funding for Working Well Together as the state-wide collaborative working toward the inclusion of consumers, parents and families into the mental health work-force.