



Analysis of Peer Support as a Resource for Recovery for Mental Health Consumers

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Kathryn Vincer MN RN
School of Nursing, Dalhousie University



Presentation Outline

- Background
- Critique of Relevant Frameworks
- Themes Emerging from the Literature
- Role of Community Health Nurse
- Implications for Mental Health Recovery
- Conclusions

Background

- Objective of policy practicum fieldwork
- Self-Help Connection
- Personal Location



Mental Health Statistics

- **20%** Canadians experience a mental illness (Kirby & Keon, 2006)
- **1,000,000** have severe and persistent disease (Dion, 2008)
- **25%** workforce affected (Dion, 2008)
- **2/3** people with mental illness or addictions do not seek help (Kirby & Keon, 2006)
- Nova Scotia **lowest** level of psychological well-being (Muzychka, 2007)



Definition of Mental Health

“a state of well being in which the individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his own community.” (Kirby, Howlett, & Chodos, 2009b, p. 5)

Definition of Peer Support

- “...a person living with a mental illness, assisting other people living with mental illness, move forward in their Recovery.”

(Consumer, Family, and Community Involvement Working Group, 2008, p. 2)

- Peer support works

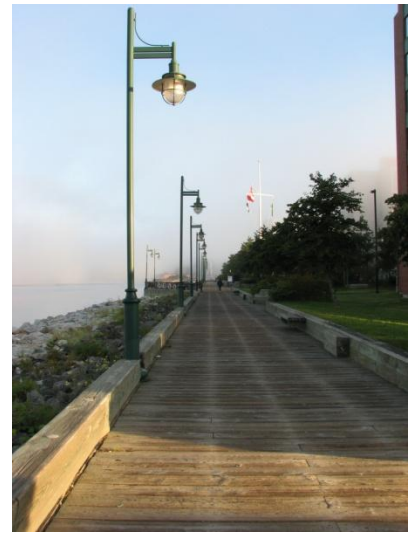
(Kirby & Keon, 2006)



Mental Health Recovery

- “a journey of healing that builds on individual, family, cultural, and community strengths, and enables people living with mental health problems and illness to lead meaningful lives in the community, despite any limitation imposed by their condition.”

(Kirby, Howlett, & Chodos, 2009b, p. 8)



Critique of Frameworks Canadian



- **1986** Achieving Health For All: A Framework For Health Promotion
- **1988** Mental Health For Canadians: Striking A Balance
- **2004** A Framework for Support
- **2009** Toward Recovery And Well-Being

Critique of Frameworks Nova Scotia

- **2000** Mental Health: A Time for Action
- **2004** Standards for Mental Health Services
- **2007** Provincial Health Services Operational Review





Themes Emerging from the Literature

- Underlying process of peer support
- Peer delivered services
- Characteristics of peer providers
- Mental Health Recovery
- **Mental Health Outcomes**

Role of Community Health Nurse in Peer Support and Mental Health Recovery utilizing the *Canadian Community Health Nursing Standards of Practice*





Promoting Health

- Peer support is a **health promoting strategy**
- **Empowering** hope for recovery
- **Advocate** for supportive environments



Building Individual and Community Capacity

- Develop **programs**
- Build on **strengths**
- Social **capital**



Building Relationships

- Develop **trust, respect, dignity**
- **Communicate** with peer support workers
- Work with **collaborative teams** including peer support workers



Facilitating Access and Equity

- Knowledge of **peer support resources** in community
- Focus on **target groups**
 - ◆ vulnerable populations
 - ◆ healthy groups



Demonstrating Professional Responsibility and Accountability

- Knowledge of peer support/mental illness based on **evidence from different sources**
- Reduce **stigma and discrimination**
- Aware of and help **create policies** for peer support



Implications of Peer Support for Mental Health Recovery

- Start by listening to consumers
- Obtain recognition amongst official bodies for peer support
- Develop collaborative partnerships with stakeholders including mental health consumers
- Build on the capacity of **peer support structures** that are effectively working



... Implications of Peer Support for Mental Health Recovery

- Create a division within Public Health **focusing on mental health**
- Provide information to the public on the cost of mental illness to society
- Train more peer support specialists (champions)
- Continue research on the effectiveness of peer support

Conclusions

- **Peer support** is a useful resource for recovery
- Viable frameworks already in place
- Governments ready to commit resources
- **Community Health Nurses can be advocates for peer support.**

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**“You alone can do it,
but you cannot do it
alone”**

(Borkman, 1999)



Thank You



Contact Information

- Kathryn Vincer
- vincer@ns.sympatico.ca