Building Peer Support Programs for Wellbeing at UNC-Chapel Hill

April 7, 2020

Presented by
Peers for Progress at UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health & the UNC Mental Health Coalition
Webinar Agenda

1. INTRODUCTIONS
2. WHAT IS PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE: Implications for Campus Mental Health
3. INTERVIEW FINDINGS
4. SUPPORT SKILLS & RULES OF THUMB
5. TRAINING RESOURCES
6. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: Program Management & Development
7. CLOSING
8. OPTIONAL EXTENDED DISCUSSION TIME
Panelist Introductions

Edwin Fisher    Patrick Tang    Samantha Luu
Panelist Introductions, Continued

Emma Caponigro

Hannah Barker
What Is People Helping People: Implications for Campus Mental Health
1. The trained Community Health Worker teaching diabetes self management classes and following up to help people implement what they’ve learned

2. The policeman grocery shopping for a 90+ neighbor

3. The grandmothers trained to provide problem solving interventions on Friendship Benches for people with mental health problems in Zimbabwe

4. The Sisters Network of African American women with breast cancer who meet monthly to encourage each other and as needed to help each other

5. The high-school classmates many years past their graduation who have organized a Zoom meet to stay in touch with each other

6. Alcoholics Anonymous and many other 12-step programs
Publications in PubMed with Peer Support and Related Terms in Titles or Abstracts: 2005 through 2018

People Helping People at Universities

1. Trained students leading a group peer support program in conjunction with counseling services
2. Resident Advisors
3. Groups with shared common interests/concerns: LGBTQ; common ethnicity; body concerns; concerns about sexual violence
4. Clubs, teams, other activities, sororities and fraternities
5. Groups promoting stigma-free understanding of mental health and awareness of available services
6. Informal groups of students in specific programs, e.g., history majors pizza night
7. Groups of early career faculty sharing concerns about promotion
8. Groups of students or faculty encouraging each other's writing
Review of Mental Health Interventions Among University Students

- Effective interventions for depression and generalized anxiety included CBT, mindfulness, attention/perception modification
- Peer support among interventions with greatest benefit

Among University Students

6-session program led by trained students

- 2-day training
- Supervision through on-campus supervisor
- Focus on self care activities, behavior change and goals setting, self soothing
- Significant increases in well being

Among University Students

Students Helping Students – McLean Hospital

- Trained students across varied campuses in Massachusetts – e.g., 600 in 2013
- Varied skills including seeking resources, coping, navigating relationships, etc.

At Worcester Polytech, *Student Support Network*

- About 10% of undergrads participated in groups of about 15-18 students

Five Key Functions of Peer Support

- Being There, Shared Experience
- Ongoing Support
- Assistance in Daily Management
- Linkage to Clinical and Community Resources
- Social and Emotional Support
University Peer Support
Formal Peer Support

**Peer-Based Support Network**

Weekly group meetings facilitated by trained peers to promote students' emotional and mental wellness in an accessible, confidential, and inclusive environment.

**When are meetings?**
- Meetings will run weekly beginning February 3rd and will meet weekly until LWOC.
- Time slots are available on the sign-up form.

**What can I expect?**
- A judgment-free zone
- Genuine care and understanding
- Privacy and trust
- Warmth and enthusiasm

**Why should I join?**
- To be a part of a safe space for students
- To provide support for others
- To meet cool people

Sign up to enter the program from January 2nd to January 24th.
To sign up or for more information visit [http://bit.ly/2mit0Hz](http://bit.ly/2mit0Hz)
Informal Peer Support

- No hard and fast rules
- Lots of different models
- 800+ student organizations
Interview Findings & Feedback
Peer Support at UNC

Formal
- Approaches ranges from “motivational coaching” to weekly support groups to online peer support
- Identified some similar, some unique issues
- Often catered to communities

Informal
- Mainly weekly or bi-weekly meetings
- Some bigger educational or advocacy-based events
- Desire to expand services
Common Strengths & Challenges

Common Barriers:

1) Need for additional leadership/support staff
2) Difficulty with participant recruitment and retention
3) Challenges navigating available resources
   a) Dissatisfaction with formal & referral services on campus
4) Competition between groups providing similar services and programming
5) Difficulty "standing out" to students (i.e. Message Fatigue)
6) Mental health support not a priority of funding or early year planning
7) Need for supervisory permissions
8) Challenges in trying to collaborate with other groups

Common Strengths:

1) Consistent members at meetings
2) A sense of shifting stigma
3) Openness to programming
4) Support networks already exist outside of mental-health specific environments
5) Online resources for navigation in development
6) Some university response to MHTF report
7) Groups already learning and collaborating through the MHC
8) Desire to show each other kindness and improve student wellbeing
Desired Education & Resources

1. Skills enhancement, Program improvement and Coordination
   - Maintaining the mental health of the peer supporters
   - Increase in available peer support "trainings" ranging from mental health "awareness" to cognitive behavioral therapy
   - Desire to be "peer certified"
   - Accessible examples of PS program curricula
   - Reach vulnerable groups on campus, without creating stigma
   - How to create an open, welcoming, comfortable, and safe space for students to come and talk about issues
   - Learning about issue-specific or community-specific topics (& exploring intersectionality)
   - How to explain the benefits of peer support to participants

2. Coordination & Communication
   - Greater knowledge and awareness of available campus resources
   - How to encourage student group leadership participation
   - How to smoothly transfer ownership of PS programs

3. Campus-Oriented Improvements
   - Trainings for staff/faculty on avoiding perpetration of bias
   - Access to culturally representative providers at CAPS
   - Knowledge about providers off-campus that meant specific needs
Future Program Goals

1) Improve feedback collection & evaluation methods for current programs
2) Continue to grow group participation and the breadth of the PS programs on campus
3) Increase collaborate with other campus groups, counseling centers on campuses, and beyond the scope of UNC campus
   a) Collaboration with groups with like-minded goals
4) "Creating community" atmosphere within clubs
5) Providing tools for students to practice positivity, problem-solving, and build self-esteem
6) Increased awareness and involvement of faculty and staff in efforts to address and improve campus mental health
Asking for Feedback

Any important points that I missed?

How can we learn from and use these findings when starting new programs?
Support Skills and Rules of Thumb
Guiding Principles

1. A peer supporter’s effectiveness doesn’t come from being an expert
2. Peer supporters do not provide medical advice
3. Peer support can be therapeutic but it is not therapy
4. People are capable of solving their own problems if given the chance
5. Don’t worry about knowing the right thing to say
Peer Support Ethics

1. Respect individual differences, including choices people make
2. Honor diversity in all its forms
3. Maintain confidentiality - HIPAA, FERPA
4. Learn as much as possible about the issues that affect participants
5. Only offer information that you are qualified to offer and with the greatest accuracy
6. Follow through on your word and promises
7. Acknowledge when issues are outside of your scope of practice
8. Report actual or potential harm to participants
# Basic Competencies

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<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Able to build rapport and trust</td>
<td>You are able to get to know the person and let them get to know you – authenticity</td>
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<td>Be available and reliable</td>
<td>“Being there” for participants is valuable in and of itself – Really, it is the base and core of all good peer support</td>
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<td>Demonstrates empathy</td>
<td>Participants can sense that you have “walked in their shoes”, and you understand their feelings and emotions</td>
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<td>Keeps contact light and non-demanding</td>
<td>“Check-ins” not “Check-ups”</td>
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<td>Shows sensitivity and good judgement</td>
<td>Know when to push and know when to back off</td>
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<td>Able to facilitate behavior changes</td>
<td>Help participants to identify something they can do and figure out how to try</td>
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Skills that Peers Use Everyday

- Active Listening
- Storytelling / Strategic Disclosure
- Problem-Solving / Making a Plan
- Group Facilitation
- Referral and Follow Up
Supervision, monitoring, and backup are often more valuable than initial trainings.
### Keys to Success

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<th>LISTEN</th>
<th>ASK</th>
<th>NOTICE</th>
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<td>Practice active listening</td>
<td>Use open-ended questions to encourage participants to share meaningful information</td>
<td>Recognize when participants are experiencing serious problems or distress</td>
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<tr>
<th>FOLLOW UP</th>
<th>LEAN</th>
<th>“BE THERE”</th>
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<td>Check-in on participants regularly to see how things are working out</td>
<td>Lean on your supervisor if you are unsure about anything</td>
<td>One of the most powerful things is simply being there</td>
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Building on Strengths

Q. What’s the most valuable resource in a peer support program?

A. The peers and the strengths they bring
Skill-building for providing peer support begins by acknowledging your individual strengths.
What do you bring to the table?

Being Yourself
You do not need to be licensed therapist to provide peer support. Being yourself is good enough.

Using Your Expertise
You can apply what you have learned through coursework, volunteering, and working to recognize where your skills lie.

Giving Your Time
By giving others a moment of your time and a person to reach out to, you are creating an environment of support.
Please tell us about what other resources or trainings you’ve used in the chat...
Looking to the Future: Program Development and Management
Program Development

Responsibilities

● Identifying stakeholders
  ○ Peer Supporters
  ○ Supported Peers
  ○ Adjacent Leadership
  ○ Others?
● Engaging/surveying your stakeholders
● Tailoring program and training

Resources

● Peers for Progress: http://peersforprogress.org/take-action/start-a-program/
● Johns Hopkins: https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/armstrong_institute/peer_support_roadmap/four_parts/
● Equity in MH Framework: https://equityinmentalhealth.org/
SWOT Analysis

Case Study: Peer Mentoring Program

How was the program developed?

- Program Reviews
- Literature Reviews
- What motivates mentorship?
- How much time for training?
- How do programs function?
- What success factors and barriers exist and how can we address them?

Mini-Interviews, Consult
- 10 Advisors
  - 5 Cancer Advisors
  - 1 ED, Behavioral Health
  - 4 Rehab Advisor - Mentor
- 6 Peer Mentor Practitioners
- 3 Nurse Navigators
- 4+ Researchers
- Loretta Muss

Clinician Reception
- Nurse Navigators
- Physicians
Program Management

- Managing timelines
- Managing funds
- Volunteer management
- Matching and facilitating connections
- Coordinating back-up and Supervision
- Leading check-ins
- Data Collection / Analysis
- Continuous quality improvement
Collaborative Learning Networks

- Framework for cross-group collaboration
- Provides a space for sharing...
  - Resources
  - Lessons learned
  - Training
  - Back-up
- Collective opportunity to learn from other institutions and community organizations
Open Discussion (For Extended Time)

1. What programs would you like to see next year in your own groups or across campus?
2. How can you prepare for that now?
3. What support are you looking for? From whom?
4. We’ve been advocating for administrative support for a collaborative learning network and have been in contact with the UNC Mental Health Coalition. In your opinions, what kind of support would you like from Peers for Progress?
Thank you for joining us

Contact us with any additional questions or thoughts

- Ed - fishere@email.unc.edu
- Pat - ptang@unc.edu
- Samantha - samantha_luu@unc.edu
- Emma - emmacap@live.unc.edu
- Hannah - helise@live.unc.edu

Slides will be available at:
www.peersforprogress.org/get-connected/unc-ch-peer-support-pods
Extended Discussion Time
Discussion

1. What programs would you like to see next year in your own groups or across campus? How can you prepare for that now?
   a. How has COVID-19 impacted current initiatives?
   b. How does this inform future planning?
2. What support are you looking for? From whom?
3. We’ve been advocating for administrative support for a collaborative learning network and have been in contact with the UNC Mental Health Coalition. In your opinions, what kind of support would you like from Peers for Progress?
4. What would you like to learn from each other now?