

## CHECK THESE OUT...



**WWT Consumer and Family Member Employment Development Assessment Tool-**  
Working Well Together has designed this assessment tool as a means of identifying the level of preparedness a county possesses to successfully engage in hiring and retaining individuals with lived experience in their workforce.

<http://workingwelltogether.org/dnn/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=gO782vtmqEO%3d&tabid=36>

## **RAND Corporation - Mental Health Consumer Providers: A Guide for Clinical Staff-**

The purpose of this booklet is to provide mental health clinic staff with a brief guide to implementing and sustaining a consumer provider program. Consumer providers (CPs) are individuals with serious mental illness who are trained to use their experiences to provide recovery-oriented services and support to others with mental illness in a mental health service delivery setting.

[http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical\\_reports/2008/RAND\\_TR584.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/2008/RAND_TR584.pdf)

# Issue 19

# focus

● Issue 19 2012

## TOPIC WATCH

Each month we will feature a different topic; expanding the knowledge, resources, and peer networking in targeted areas. These target areas will include workforce development, transition, supported education, leadership, organizational development, sustainability, and others as they are identified.



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## Workforce Development: Consumer Organization Opportunities

“Workforce development” is a term that has been used to describe efforts that agencies and government programs use to increase employment. Workforce development has become a critical asset in today’s economy, because it is an important component in creating, sustaining and retaining a viable workforce. The public and private mental health service delivery system has utilized the workforce development model to find new ways to maximize dollars, while simultaneously building the capacity of the mental health workforce to deliver better services and supports.

Workforce development doesn't just focus on the entire community; it also focuses on individuals. Through workforce development, the workforce (professional and nonprofessional) can receive training that increases their competency and makes them a greater asset. Workforce development also provides assistance to those who are unemployed, underemployed, or are veterans.

Workforce development considers the following:

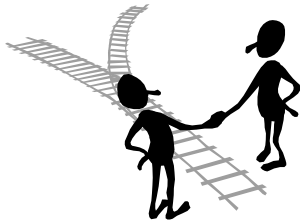
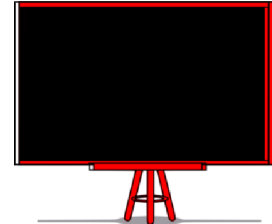
- Leadership that ensures a strong workforce that is better equipped to create new opportunities and recruit additional individuals into the workforce.
- Sustainability through improved recruitment, hiring, training, and support of a workforce that includes new and emerging positions, such as peer specialists and peer support providers.
- Targeted training through ongoing opportunities for workforce skill development that facilitates successful outcomes in the populations served.
- Certification in new areas that promotes consistent values, practices, and competencies, and results in a career ladder for new professional positions.
- Attitude shifts that align with competency and need based services by a multi agency, diverse team of professionals that includes consumers with lived experiences.

## Roles of Organizations in Facilitating Workforce Development that is Consumer Driven

Organizations have a multitude of opportunities to participate in and influence workforce development within the public and private mental health arenas. As the Affordable Care Act is rolled out, organizations will have to promote their presence as **critical team members in adjusting and shaping a ready workforce**. Some potential roles might include:

### Trainers:

Consumer run organizations and their members are the **real-world testing ground for service practices and policies**. Organizations should be promoting their capacity as trainers in content areas (such as inpatient care and service coordination). Nationally, training programs and curriculums are emerging from consumer run organizations and being included as key elements of competency based provider training. For some organizations, they may serve as reviewers of training programs, ensuring it is consumer driven and reflects models that are consistent with evidence based practices.

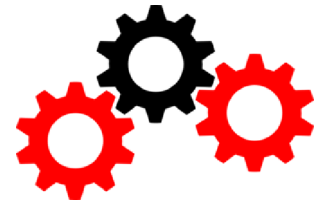


### Providers of Services:

Consumer run organizations can be feeder programs **for peer consultants and lived experience employees**. By continuing to foster leadership among their membership, organizations are becoming the resource for programs searching for lived experience employees. In addition, organizations can serve on program evaluation teams, providing the most important component of program evaluation: the consumer voice.

### Contractors:

Consumer run organization may also be asked to serve as employment contractors with public health programs. They are in an excellent position to provide an overlay of services that they are **better suited to manage than government systems may be**. For example, some consumer run organizations recruit, hire, train, and supervise consumer employees for county mental health programs. Since they have lived experience, they have a unique ability to prepare consumer employees to work in the system.



Consumer run organizations and consumer leaders will need to develop their own capacity to serve as critical team members in workforce development. The good news is that their experiences, expertise, and skills cannot be matched through traditional education and training. **There is a great opportunity for consumers to play a central role in shaping tomorrow's workforce**. As the practice of workforce development evolves in response to the changing mental health service landscape, consumer leaders and organization will have a chance to step up to the plate and claim roles, responsibilities, and opportunities that are most suited to their capacity and the needs of consumers in their communities.

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