Focus 2.0

A Publication of The CAFÉ TA Center

Issue 6

What is the Focus 2.0?

The *Focus 2.0* newsletter highlights important issues in mental health, providing timely information on recovery, peer support, and the value of including people with lived experience in the mental health system of care.

Have a suggestion for a topic? Let us know!

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Mental Health and the Working World

For people in recovery from serious mental health conditions, employment can offer both a path to self-sufficiency, and a sense of purpose. Not only does the income that comes from employment make an independent life in the community possible, but the opportunity to do meaningful work, develop marketable skills, and make social connections and can also enhance wellness and support recovery.

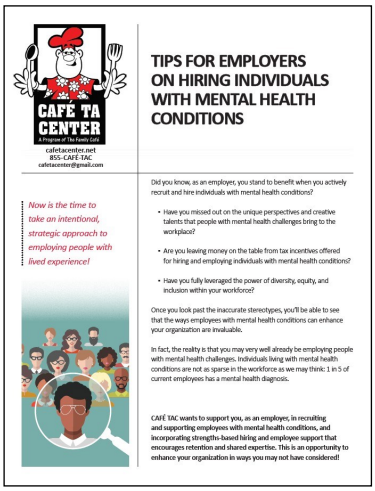
Unfortunately, many people in recovery face barriers in finding and sustaining employment. One reason for this is the number of false assumptions and misconceptions employers have about potential employees with mental health conditions. For more people with mental health conditions to have access to employment, a conversation involving employers and people with lived experience needs to take place. Once employers come to realize that workers with mental health needs can be valuable members of their teams, opportunities for those workers will expand.

There are certainly challenges around making employment opportunities available to people with serious mental health conditions, and changing the workplace culture to make inclusion and wellness priorities for every employer. With the right tools and messages, advocates can help bridge the gap between people in recovery that are ready, able, and willing to work, and the companies and organization that would benefit from making them a part of their workplaces.

The "Mental Health at Work: What Can *I* Do" PSA Campaign

One recent effort at opening up that conversation comes from The Campaign for Disability Employment's "Mental Health at Work: What Can *I* Do" PSA Campaign. The video PSA, which can be found online at https://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/psa-campaigns/mental-health-psa/, features the perspective of a business owner, a manager, a coworker, and most importantly, an employee with lived experience as they discuss how to build an inclusive workplace, develop supports and accommodations, and bring a focus on mental wellness to the office. It includes a number of helpful materials, including an interactive workplace guide, that can be of use in starting the conversation about mental health, recovery, and employment.

CAFÉ TAC is also working to provide tools to help advocates and people with lived experience make the case for employment. Our first guide, "Tips for Employers on Hiring Individuals with Mental Health Conditions," explains the financial and strategic benefits of brining workers with mental health experiences into their organizations, and examines common myths about people with lived experience in the workplace. The most recent guide, "Supporting Employees With Mental Health Conditions," includes advice for employers on best practices to support employees who may be experiencing mental health issues, whether they have chosen to disclose them or not.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TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS ON HIRING INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Now is the time to take an intentional, strategic approach to employing people with lived experience!

Did you know, as an employer, you stand to benefit when you actively recruit and hire individuals with mental health conditions?

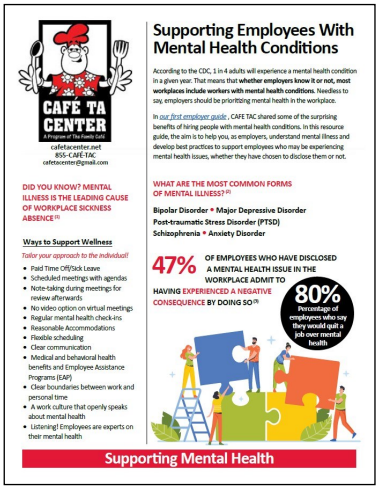
- Have you missed out on the unique perspectives and creative talents that people with mental health challenges bring to the workplace?
- Are you leaving money on the table from tax incentives offered for hiring and employing individuals with mental health conditions?
- Have you fully leveraged the power of diversity, equity, and inclusion within your workforce?

Once you look past the inaccurate stereotypes, you'll be able to see that the ways employees with mental health conditions can enhance your organization are invaluable.

In fact, the reality is that you may very well already be employing people with mental health challenges. Individuals living with mental health conditions are not as sparse in the workforce as we may think: 1 in 5 of current employees has a mental health diagnosis.

CAFÉ TAC wants to support you, as an employer, in recruiting and supporting employees with mental health conditions, and incorporating strengths-based hiring and employee support that encourages retention and shared expertise. This is an opportunity to enhance your organization in ways you may not have considered!

CAFÉ TAC is pleased to offer the two tip sheets we have created to help open up that conversation, and we're looking forward to doing more. Stay tuned for details about a new series we're developing to help peers develop the skills and resources to find employment and succeed in the workplace. It will provide practical guidance and tools people with serious mental health conditions can use to identify their skills, talk about their lived experience, and navigate the balance between work and wellness.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Supporting Employees With Mental Health Conditions

According to the CDC, 1 in 4 adults will experience a mental health condition in a given year. That means that **whether employees know it or not, most workplaces include workers with mental health conditions.** Needless to say, employers should be prioritizing mental health in the workplace.

In *our first employer guide*, CAFÉ TAC shared some of the surprising benefits of hiring people with mental health conditions. In this resource guide, the aim is to help you, as employers, understand mental illness and develop best practices to support employees who may be experiencing mental health issues, whether they have chosen to disclose them or not.

DID YOU KNOW? MENTAL ILLNESS IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF WORKPLACE SICKNESS ABSENCE[1]

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON FORMS OF MENTAL ILLNESS?[2]

Bipolar Disorder • Major Depressive Disorder
Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
Schizophrenia • Anxiety Disorder

Ways to Support Wellness

Tailor your approach to the individual!

- Paid Time Off/Sick Leave
- Scheduled meetings with agendas
- Note-taking during meetings for review afterwards
- No video option on virtual meetings
- Regular mental health check-ins
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Flexible scheduling
- Clear communication
- Medical and behavioral health benefits and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
- Clear boundaries between work and personal time
- A work culture that openly speaks about mental health
- Listening! Employees are experts on their mental health

47% OF EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE DISCLOSED A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE IN THE WORKPLACE ADMIT TO HAVING EXPERIENCED A NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCE BY DOING SO[3]

80% Percentage of employees who say they would quit a job over mental health

Supporting Mental Health

In the meantime, we would love to hear about your own experiences! Take a short survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WDYWETK to let us know a little about your employment status, and what you wish employers understood about hiring, supervising, and supporting workers with mental health conditions.

SAMHSA Recovery Innovation

If there's one thing you can say about people in the mental health recovery and peer support community, and the peer-run organizations that they come together to run, it's that they know innovation! Bringing recovery and lived experience to the mental health system of care has always been about creating innovative approaches to improve outcomes, reduce costs, and create compassionate, inclusive, effective alternatives.

Thanks to a new opportunity through SAMHSA's first-ever Recovery Innovation Challenge, new funding is now available to bring some of those innovative ideas to life. The goal of this challenge is to identify innovations developed by peer-run or community-based organizations that advance recovery. This challenge will allow participants to share details about innovative practices and models being used to advance recovery on the ground and to demonstrate how these innovations expand upon SAMHSA's definition or overcome challenges in incorporating recovery into their services or systems.

Learn more about the Recovery Innovation Challenge at https://www.challenge.gov/?challenge=recovery. Submissions must be received by July 15, and the challenge purse is up to $400,000.

988 in Your State

As you've probably heard, a new three-digit national crisis and suicide prevention line, 988, is set to become operational in July, 2022. But did you know that SAMHSA has awarded more than $105 million in grant funding to bolster crisis call centers throughout the country? With an expected increase in call volume, and different states accessing different partners to meet the demand, it's helpful for advocates to know what organizations are involved in their states and communities.

Check out the press release about new 988 funding at https://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/press-announcements/20220419/hhs-awards-105-million-states-territories-strengthen-crisis-call-center-services and see the list or award recipients at https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/awards/2022/SM-22-015. You might find a new partner that's interested in bringing peer support, recovery, and the lived experience workforce to their crisis line work!

Capacity Corner: A Column about Capacity-Building for Your Peer-Run Organization

CAFÉ TAC is pleased to share this feature, a column from CAFÉ TAC Training Coordinator John Ferrone on leadership challenges within peer-run organizations, where many advocates with lived experience direct their efforts to promote recovery and inspire change.

This time the focuses is on ***Program/Service Development: From Idea to Implementation***

In past articles we've focused on the dynamics of leadership between the Board and Executive Director, and how manage these dynamics so as to increase the organization's sustainability. In this article, we're going to delve into the mechanics of program or service development, delivering a broad overview of the process and the key activities within each of the process steps. Each organization is different, of course, and will have its own unique variables to consider, but the template provided herein is applicable to most situations with just a bit of customization and refinement.

First, what is program/service development? Let's look at the words, starting with the easy word, 'development.' Development is the process of creating the parts that, together, make the whole. That's pretty straightforward, and the challenge is making sure you've identified all of the necessary parts, that you develop each part accurately, and that you can assemble the parts into the whole. The word 'program' or 'service' for the purpose of this article is referring to an offering that your organization provides to the people you serve. Together, the phrase 'program/service development' means that you are identifying the parts of a program or service, and then creating them and assembling them so that you can offer the whole as a program or service to the people served by your organization.

So far that all sounds rudimentary, and the reason we took a moment to define the words is so that we can keep track of where we are in the process of Program/Service Development. The process, you see, begins before there are any parts to create and assemble towards building the program or service.

You'll see in the following steps how the words we defined above don't even show up in their own process until further down in the steps. Here's the process for program/service development:

Step 1: Discern what your program/service will focus on, what it will offer, and what the targeted outcomes will be. This step can be a bit tricky. Many organizations will have a meeting, and someone will say, "I think we should do XYZ," and everyone will agree and start doing it. They immediately jump to the development of the program or service. Instead, organizations should be asking questions such as: What can we do to further our Mission? What program or service is a good fit with our Vision? What feedback/data do we have that demonstrates a need for a certain program or service that we can offer? Without answering these questions, the XYZ idea—whatever it is—has no story or context, and is at great risk of being a flash in the pan that quickly dissipates.

Step 2: Once the above questions are answered, you now have a concept or idea about what the XYZ program or service might be. Now it's time to brainstorm. Use these questions to help your brainstorming: Who

will be served? What will they gain? How many people need this? What if their need is not met? These questions help you begin to think about your target audience, target outcomes for that audience, the level of need for those outcomes, what happens if the need goes unmet—and all of these are key components to future fundraising efforts tied to this program or service.

Step 3: Once you have satisfactory answers to the questions in Step 2, it's time to do some actual planning, and this is where you identify the parts of the future program or service. Answer these questions: What, exactly, will be offered in this new program or service? Where will this program or service be deployed or offered? Who will offer it? How will it be offered? How will it be measured? How will it be marketed? How much will each of these items cost per year? These questions are the nuts and bolts of the program or service. In other words, you'll know after this step whether or not you have what it takes to do it, or if you'll need to do some fundraising.

Step 3.5: If you need to do some fundraising, do this step. If not, go on to Step 4. To fundraise for this new program or service, you need to utilize the following storyboard to create a pitch with your information and take it to primary funding sources who know that your organization does good work and who would be willing to help provide seed funding to get this new program/service started. The storyboard is:

1. Thanks for taking time to meet with us.
2. You've been a wonderful partner and have provided funding because you value our Mission and you have come to trust that we transform the generous donations from donors like you into programs and services that accomplish that Mission.
3. We have learned that XYZ is a great need within the community of people we serve. Here's how we know (share the information that proves that XYZ is a need).
4. XYZ results in these effects (describe the impact of the XYZ need), and if XYZ is left unaddressed, the effects get worse (describe the future if XYZ is not addressed).
5. We believe that our organization can play a role to empower the people we serve to address XYZ in their lives.
6. We have developed a program concept around XYZ, and it looks like this (provide a brief overview of the program or service, answering the questions above in Steps 1, 2, and 3, starting with Mission and Vision and going all the way through what the new program or service will be, ending with how it will be marketed and measured, and the budget to implement it).
7. We're sharing this program concept with you because we are hoping that you might be interested to help us launch this program with a donation of seed funding.
8. In the long term, we anticipate that the outcomes from this program will help us share a powerful story with additional donors who would then be willing to consider supporting the program ongoing.

Step 4: Most likely you read through Step 3.5 because everyone is interested in fundraising. You will have seen how everything ties together, from Mission to funding. For Step 4, we're assuming that your organization has the funding, or has a funding commitment. It's time to create and assemble the parts of the program or service that correspond to the high-level pieces. For example, Who will deliver the program? It's time to create the job descriptions, and management process. Or, How will the program be marketed? It's time to create the marketing material. Create all of the parts that correspond to the questions above, while at the same time figuring out a timeline for when you want to begin marketing the program and when you anticipate actually delivering it.

Step 5: You have created the parts, and now it is time to manage them as a whole and implement the new program or service. Begin marketing (if you have not already) and be patient. It's okay to start slowly. Work out the kinks. Empower the Program Manager to make decisions and adjustments. Make sure your measurement processes are in place and working as planned. Use successes to help future marketing, and build momentum. Be sure to report back to your donors who helped with seed funding, too.

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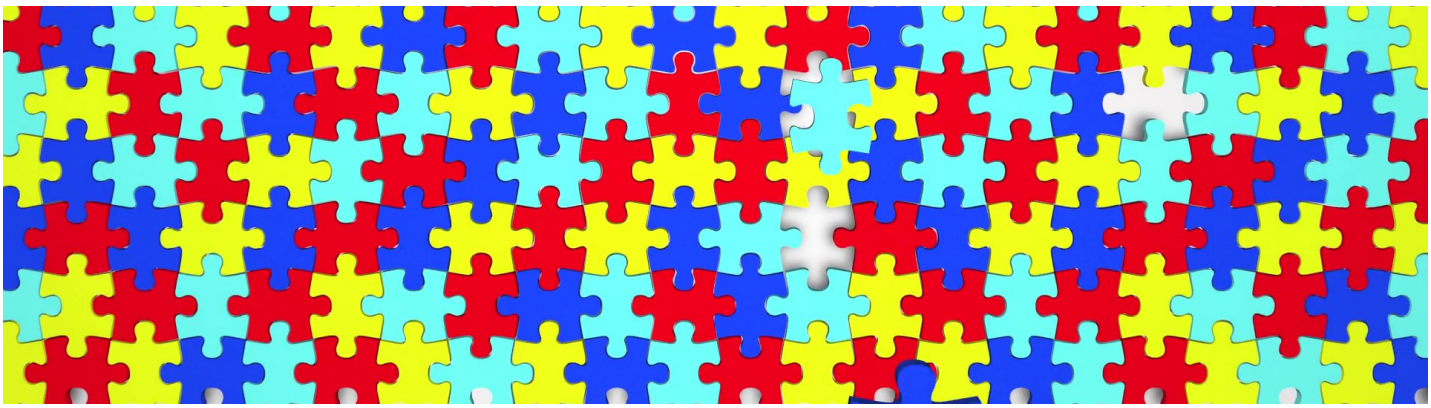
If you can complete these steps, congratulate yourself! You've conceived of, designed, and implemented a new program or service that will positively impact the lives of the many people your organization serves! .

Is there a leadership challenge you're facing in your peer-run organization or advocacy efforts? We want to hear about it! Reach out to us at cafetacenter@gmail.com with your question or comment. We will be happy to help, and your challenge might just be the subject of our next Capacity Corner column! (Anonymously and with your consent, of course!)



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Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
SAMHSA
www.samhsa.gov • 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)

The CAFÉ TA Center
820 E Park Ave. Ste. F-100
Tallahassee, FL 32301
855-CAFÉ-TAC (223-3822)
www.CAFETACENTER.net

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