

Focus 2.0

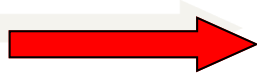
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Issue 1

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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Welcome to the Focus 2.0 Newsletter

The CAFÉ Mental Health Technical Assistance Center, aka CAFÉ TAC, welcomes you to the first issue of our program newsletter, *Focus 2.0*.

We have launched this newsletter thanks to a new SAMHSA-funded 5-year Consumer Supporter Technical Assistance Center grant award. Over the past ten years, CAFÉ TAC has worked closely with a variety of peer-run organizations that represent people with mental health conditions and certified peer specialists in states across the country. We're proud of the work we've done to help consumers build sustainable organizations that can represent the peer voice and promote recovery in their states and communities.

With this new round of funding, CAFÉ TAC's scope has expanded. While we remain a resource for peer-run organizations, CAFÉ TAC will now provide information, training, and resources on a broad range of topics that impact people with mental health conditions, their recovery and treatment, and their inclusion in our nation's mental health system.

With a fresh start on our technical assistance efforts, we have decided to reboot our previous *Focus* newsletter as *Focus 2.0*!

As a technical assistance center serving people with lived experience of mental health conditions, we have witnessed the transformative power of recovery advocates with lived experience of mental health conditions. We believe that recognition of the value and capability of people with lived experience, including certified peer specialists, is critical to radically improving the lives of people with mental health conditions, the systems that serve them, and the public's understanding of mental health.

What We Plan To Do

To create the positive change we envision, CAFÉ TAC will share information on the evidence base for the effectiveness of people with lived experience in the system of care, and the many roles in which they can excel. The project will also support people with lived experience to grow and thrive in their recovery through access to educational opportunity, connection with family and other natural community supports, and linkages to resources on employment and economic self-sufficiency. Finally, CAFÉ TAC will be a point of access for a wealth of nationally relevant resources, connecting individuals with news and information from a host of partners.

Topic We'll Address

Areas that CAFÉ TAC will address will include:

- The integration of peers in the treatment delivery system as part of evidenced-based approaches to care.
- Roles for peers in crisis services in multiple settings, including services linked to healthcare systems, certified community behavioral health clinics, or hospital emergency departments; follow-up and linkage to care; and in integrated care settings.
- Training and information for people with lived experience that want to become peer specialists.
- Supported education to help students with mental health needs succeed in academic settings.
- Resources and training on youth leadership in mental health.
- Information on the role families can play in supporting individual recovery.
- Job-seeking and employment for people with mental health conditions.
- Economic self-sufficiency, money management, and financial literacy for people with mental health conditions.
- Information on recruiting and retaining peer specialists and employees with lived experience for state and local organizations.

We Want to Hear From You

To be effective, CAFÉ TAC needs to understand the needs and priorities of people with lived experience. That's why we're asking for your input!

We have created a short survey as a means for you to let us know what your priorities are. [You can find it here \(https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CAFETAC-survey\)](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CAFETAC-survey). We would really appreciate your input! Help us make sure we meet your needs!

CAFÉ TAC Webinar Examines Peer Leadership

Individuals with mental health conditions have the experience, knowledge, and understanding to transform the mental health system of care to make it more effective. The challenge is translating that ability into action that will lead to systems change.

On November 5th, CAFÉ TAC began its exploration of peer leadership how to turn lived experience into leadership in a webinar entitled “Leadership Roles for Peers and Peer Specialists . . . within Peer-Run Organizations, the CPS Industry, and the Peer Community.” It featured peer leaders taking different paths through working in peer-led organizations, promoting the value of lived experience and peer support to potential partners, and creating a community of recovery through networking and service.



You can view a full recording of the November webinar at <https://tinyurl.com/y6am8kz4>.

Join the Conversation

CAFÉ TAC made a purposeful decision to begin a conversation about leadership, because elevating the leadership voice of people with lived experience is so central to unlocking their potential to transform approaches to care and bring recovery to communities across the nation.

Now, CAFÉ TAC looks forward to expanding that conversation through its **Peer Leadership Learning Community**. This learning community will engage a small group of participants in an interactive exploration of peer leadership through communal learning and dynamic conversation.

Stay tuned for details of the Peer Leadership Learning Community in early 2021!



COVID-19 and Mental Health

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is having a profound impact on Americans' mental health. Individuals with mental health conditions are facing additional stressors from concerns about contracting COVID-19, and barriers to treatment resulting from the inability to engage in face-to-face treatment, peer support, or day-to-day social interaction have become a shared challenge. Even Americans without underlying mental health conditions are reporting a reduced sense of wellbeing and higher rates of anxiety and depression. Meanwhile, consumer organizations and providers alike are struggling to innovate new ways to address the needs of those they serve through virtual contact and telehealth.

Fortunately, there are great resources available to help individuals and organizations navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are a few especially helpful examples:

- The **SAMHSA COVID-19 resource page** has a large collection of links with relevant information for individuals and providers. Find it at <https://www.samhsa.gov/coronavirus>
- SAMHSA also regularly publishes a list of **Training and Technical Assistance Related to COVID-19**. That resource is online at <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/training-and-technical-assistance-covid19.pdf>
- The **Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC)** has an informative resource page, with links to COVID-19-specific info on **topics including Grief and Loss, Intimate Partner Violence, MH Disparities, Provider Self-Care, School Mental Health, and Telehealth** at <https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/global-mhttc/responding-covid-19>
- The most recent issue of the **DTAC Bulletin** from SAMHSA's Disaster Technical Assistance Center includes timely info on dealing with **COVID-19 over the holiday season**. It's at <https://mailchi.mp/jbsinternational.com/coping-with-covid-19-and-the-holidays>
- The **Centers for Disease Control** has information on stress and mental health amidst the pandemic at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

Wherever you are, and whatever the challenges you face as a result of COVID-19, we encourage you to seek out the help you need! The [SAMHSA National Helpline](#) is available at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) , and the [National Suicide Prevention Hotline](#) is at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

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