

Focus 2.0

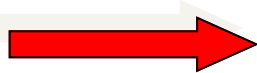
A Publication of The CAFÉ TA Center

Issue 2

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!



Connect with
The CAFÉ TA Center!
CAFETACENTER.net
[@CAFETAC](https://www.facebook.com/CAFETAC)
www.facebook.com/CAFETAC

Bringing Recovery to Mental Health Month

As part of the mental health community, you might already know about the month of May being dedicated to raising awareness about mental health. You might also know that certain days and weeks are set aside to recognize specific populations, like Children's Mental Health Awareness Week, National Older Adults Mental Health Awareness Day, or Schizophrenia Awareness Week. But what does Mental Health Month mean for people with lived experience of mental health conditions? Where do they fit in?



MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2020

First and foremost, this month is about starting discussions about mental health, and bringing those conversations into the public sphere. There are still places where misconceptions about mental health conditions or diagnoses exist, or talking openly about them is taboo. Mental Health Month provides an occasion to bring mental health to the forefront, and make it clear that openly discussing mental health is not just ok, but healthy and essential. That's an important message, and if it reaches people who hesitate to seek help because their thinking about mental conditions and diagnoses is framed in stigma, or anyone that might not otherwise stop to consider the role mental health plays in everyone's overall health and wellness, that's positive progress!

For mental health advocates with lived experience, however, there's an opportunity to take things a step further. While awareness is positive and necessary,

the impact awareness messaging has when delivered by people that live and thrive with mental health conditions can be even deeper. It's one thing for advocates to recognize the importance of mental health; it's another for people living in mental health recovery to be at the center of the conversation, educating from their own experience about what helped them in their recovery. It also offers a chance for people using their lived experience to support others, like peer specialists, to promote their role in transforming approaches to care, and bringing hope to their communities through their work.

Whether as an individual or an organization, we hope you take advantage of the opportunity to make lived experience, recovery, and peer support part of the public discussion of mental health that May brings. Of course there are many things to think about when deciding to join the conversation, but it's worth considering how valuable the voice of lived experience can be. Whether as an individual, or as a peer organization, remember that well-known advocacy saying "Nothing about us, without us," and think about the positive impact you and your peers can have by taking ownership of Mental Health Month!



What's Happening at the CAFÉ TA Center

A Youth Perspective on Mental Health Stigma

On March 30, CAFÉ TAC shared a webinar called *Destigmatizing Mental Health, Inside and Out: A Youth Perspective*. It featured a young person with lived experience discussing her leadership path, explaining how she has confronted her own internal hesitancy to recognize her mental health needs, as well as the stigma that discourages people from openly discussing mental health conditions in their communities, homes, and workplaces.



**Destigmatizing Mental Health,
Inside and Out:
A Youth Perspective**

The graphic shows a stylized brain composed of various colored watercolor splashes in shades of blue, green, yellow, and red. The text is centered over the brain.

Check out a recording of this webinar at <https://cafetacenter.net/attend-a-webinar-on-a-youth-perspective-on-mental-health-stigma/>, and stay tuned for our upcoming Learning Community on stigma, advocacy, and self-disclosure.

The Peer Leadership Learning Community

CAFÉ TAC recently completed its first learning community series. A learning community allows a small group of people to come together to learn about and discuss a specific issue in an ongoing interactive experience that allows for communal learning, sharing of best practices, and dynamic conversation. Between February and April, this learning community met five times, and enjoyed conversations about peer leadership lead by a range of guest speakers, each with their own unique leadership approach.

You can view recordings of every session in the Peer Leadership Learning Community by visiting <https://cafetacenter.net/join-a-learning-community-on-peer-leadership/>.

Join the Conversation

We have some ideas about where we'll go next, but it's not about us. We want you to drive the bus! TA works best when people guide the process, and the topics addressed are identified by those that are in search of resources, insight, and support. So let us know what you want to know!

Please take a minute to complete a short survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CAFETAC-survey> to share your feedback.

You can also stay connected with CAFÉ TAC by joining our mailing list at <https://cafetacenter.net/join-our-mailing-list/>, and you can find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) too!



Alternatives 2021

The Alternatives Conference returns for its 35th year this summer! This virtual event is happening Thursday, July 8, & Saturday, July 10, and Thursday, July 15, & Saturday, July 17, 2021.

Find the call for presentation proposals, registration info, and more details at the Alternatives 2021 website at <https://www.alternatives-conference.org/>.



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

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

This column focuses on a common challenge in peer-run consumer organizations: **dealing with a disengaged board member.**

A few weeks ago I had a conversation with a Board President. She explained that she had nine Board members and two of them “did absolutely nothing” although they attended all of the meetings. She went on to explain that there is a lot that needs to get done—fundraising, revising the Bylaws, building new relationships in the community—and she needs all Board members to pitch in and help. She has tried everything she can think of to engage these two particular Board members. That’s when she asked, “How do I move them off the Board without hurting their feelings.”

The most common reason that non-profit Boards have “dead wood” is that Board members may not know that it is their responsibility to be engaged, or, they don’t know how to engage. The way to address that is straightforward: First of all, be sure the organization has a vision that creates an overall context. Then provide a job description of what it means to be a Board member, and explain (perhaps with a handout) the various ways a Board member could and should be active towards helping the organization achieve its vision. With those three things in place, you will be empowered to set up a one-on-one conversation to explain that you were concerned that the person was not fulfilling their role according to the job description, and that you wanted to find out what the Board member’s barriers to performance might be. You can then attempt to remove those barriers. If they can’t be overcome, then it might become evident that the Board member needs to step off the Board to make room for someone else.

Key takeaways so far: 1) Ensure there is a vision; 2) Share a Board member job description; 3) Share a handout that lists the many ways a Board member can be active; and 4) Meet with the Board member to discuss how to become more active. If that’s not possible, the opportunity is there to then discuss having that person step down from the Board.

It’s not as easy as I’m making it sound, I realize. But who said building a great Board for your Peer-Run Organization was easy? The tough part is that if it comes down to guiding the Board member to exit the Board, how can you do it without hurting their feelings? Assuming you’ve tried the things mentioned above and the Board member in question really will not be able to be a contributing Board member, consider these steps:

First, please know that you are not in charge of their feelings.

Second, because you’re a nice person, you really don’t want to hurt their feelings. But see #1 again.

Third, keep in mind that the you have a responsibility to the organization, and to each Board member, including the one who is not doing very well in their role. (Keep in mind, too, that if you notice it, so do the other Board members—and they're looking to you to address the dynamic.)

Fourth, stress one more time the connection among the three items: vision, job description, engagement.

Fifth, when a person resigns from the Board, make clear that there are many ways to stay involved: as a volunteer, as a committee member, as a champion in the community, as a social media warrior on behalf of the organization, etc. A good strategy is to find out what this person loves to do with their time and talents, and then have them tie their talents into the organization's vision somehow. Give them a sense of purpose that is aligned with who they are at their core. Suggest that there could be a path back to the Board in the future.

Sixth, differentiate the role of a Board member from the specific role identified in #5. In other words, the role of a Board member is very different than the specific activity that this person would love to focus on.

Finally, be clear with the Board member: "I am asking you to resign from the Board, so that you can spend your time doing other valuable things for the organization, and so that someone who has a passion for the type of administration that the Board needs to do can join the Board and help."



Of course there are nuances to every situation, and there might be other steps between or among the steps listed above—but this is the general pattern to follow. Use your own words. Find your own voice. Be genuine, and look for the strength that the person can build upon outside the Board. Always remember: people wilt when they are not in the right role, and yet they may not know it or know how to remove themselves; on the flipside, people blossom when they are in a role that is a good fit for their talents and energy. It's your job as a Board President and peer leader to help people bloom when they're on the Board, and as they exit.

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!)

This newsletter was developed under grant number SM082668 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The views, opinions, and content expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).



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

