

Focus 2.0

A Publication of The CAFÉ TA Center

Issue 21

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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Thank You!

With the publication of this issue of *Focus 2.0*, the grant that has supported The CAFÉ TA Center is coming to an end. On that note, CAFÉ TAC would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to everyone that's been involved in our efforts to provide mental health consumers, families, professionals, and other stakeholders in the mental health system with information, training, networking opportunities and support over the last sixteen years. Whether you've read a newsletter, attended a webinar, reviewed one of our online trainings, shared your expertise as a presenter or guest speaker, or worked with us on building your peer-run organization, please know that your participation has been essential to our work, and that we're grateful to you for being a part of it.

Although The CAFÉ TA Center will no longer be a federally-funded project, everything we've done will still be available for anyone to access on our website at cafetacenter.net, including recordings of webinars, training materials, and newsletters. Here are a few highlights of what you can find there:

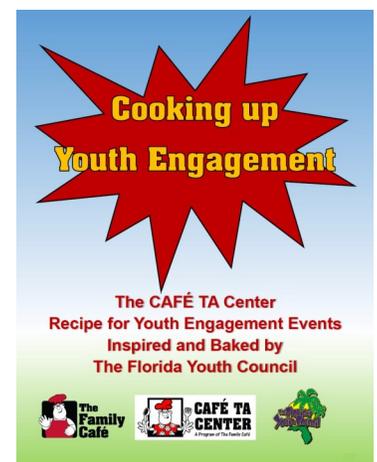
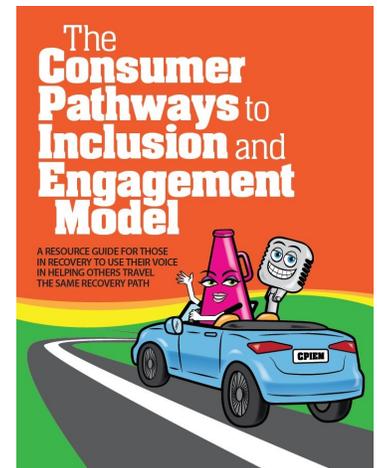
- **The Consumer Pathways to Inclusion and Engagement Model (CPIEM)** – The CPIEM is a guidebook created by peers, for peers, to help them develop the skills they need to turn their lived mental health experience into meaningful change in the mental health system of care. It's designed to help people in recovery use their voice to help others walking the same path, enable them to better understand themselves and their recovery, and use that understanding to foster systems change and the growth of person-centered, strengths-based, recovery-focused approaches to the mental health system in their states and communities.



It's at cafetacenter.net/the-consumer-pathways-to-inclusion-and-engagement-model-cpiem/

- **The Supports for Families Workshop Series** – This interactive workshop series has been designed to help family members and caregivers of people with serious mental health conditions support their family member by promoting recovery and taking a strengths-based approach to encouraging resiliency and self-direction. Find it at cafetacenter.net/supports-for-families-workshop-series/
- **Cooking Up Youth Engagement** – This document offers a “how-to” for a group of youth, or an organization, to empower young people to plan and implement an engagement in which youth come together for a common purpose, whether it be training, advocacy around a specific issue, relationship-building, fun, entertainment, and connection, activity planning and delivery, or other youth-related activities. It's at cafetacenter.net/cooking-up-youth-engagement/
- Multiple series on **employment and workplace issues** for people with mental health conditions, including:
 - The 12-part interactive employment training series **So You're Ready to Work, Now What?** at cafetacenter.net/cafe-tac-presents-so-youre-ready-to-work-now-what/
 - The four-part workplace culture series **Navigating the Workplace: A Four-Part “Case Scenario” Series** at cafetacenter.net/navigating-the-workplace-a-four-part-case-scenario-series/
 - The four-part mindful workplace series Integrating **Mindfulness Practices in the Workplace: A Four-Part Series** at cafetacenter.net/join-cafe-tac-for-integrating-mindfulness-practices-in-the-workplace-a-four-part-series/
- Additional discussions of topics including leadership, cross-disability collaboration, integrated care, personal finance, supported education, family mental health, peers engaged in system change, unhoused peers, human rights, 988 and warmlines, peer respites, recovery high schools, psychiatric advance directives, and peer service models including Hearing Voices Network, Alternatives to Suicide, Soteria Houses, and Recovery Cafés, all of which can be found on the TAC Training page at cafetacenter.net/tac-trainings/

Beyond these resources, we've also developed additional products in the past year that have been intentionally designed to meet the current moment in which people in the mental health community need solidarity and self-sufficiency more than ever.



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- To address the need for increased community engagement and mutual support among people with mental health needs, CAFÉ TAC hosted a four-part **Peer Leadership and Community Engagement** series with sections on Building Peer Communities & Mutual Aid Ecosystems, Ethics and Cultural Humility in Peer Work, Sustainable Leadership & Self-Care, and Coalition Building for Small Recovery Orgs. It's online at cafetacenter.net/join-cafe-tac-for-our-four-part-peer-leadership-and-community-engagement-series
 - To help people with lived mental health experience explore entrepreneurship as a pathway to financial independence and community impact, CAFÉ TAC offered **Empowering Peer Entrepreneurs: A Training Series for Lived Experience Leaders** to equip participants with the tools, confidence, and strategies to find alternative paths to financial independence and community impact. It's available at cafetacenter.net/empowering-peer-entrepreneurs-a-training-series-for-lived-experience-leaders

We would like to leave you with this important note: **While grants and projects come and go, the mental health recovery movement is forever.** Whether or not various institutions decide to invest in it, the reality is that **mental health recovery is real, and peer support works.** That's because **the values that guide the recovery movement, like mutuality, active listening, and empathy,** aren't just tools that can be used to achieve better mental health outcomes. They're **foundational to our understanding of how people can relate to each other and build a world where each person's humanity is recognized and honored.** That vision retains its inherent value no matter what grants or projects happen to be in place.

Going forward, you'll still be able to reach us at cafetacenter@gmail.com, and while CAFÉ TAC won't continue as a distinct project, The Family Café, the cross-disability nonprofit organization that's housed it, remains in operation. You can always connect with us there at familycafe.net.

Stay Connected

Here are some great resources to help keep you connected with what's happening in the mental health peer and recovery movement going forward:

- **The American Association for Persons with Disabilities**—aapd.com
 - **The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law**—bazelon.org
 - **The Copeland Center**—copelandcenter.com
 - **The Key Update**—mhselfhelp.org/the-key-update-latest
 - **MindFreedom International**—mindfreedom.org
 - **The National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery (NCMHR)**—ncmhr.org
 - **The National Empowerment Center**—power2u.org
 - **Youth MOVE**—youthmovenational.org
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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 column's topic is ***Understanding the Nuances of Terminating the Executive Director.***

One of the most difficult things for a Board of Directors and Executive Director to experience is a transition that involves terminating the Executive Director. No one likes when this happens, but sometimes it is necessary. This article explores some of the nuances of the topic along with related suggestions.

First, what are the reasons a Board may determine that it is necessary to terminate its Executive Director? Here is a list of the most common reasons:

1. **Financial Mismanagement or Misappropriation:** Mishandling funds, embezzlement, or failure to maintain financial stability.
2. **Poor Performance and Failure to Meet Goals:** Inability to achieve strategic initiatives, failure to improve fundraising, or poor operational performance.
3. **Ethical Misconduct or Unethical Behavior:** Legal violations, sexual harassment, or behavior harmful to the organization's reputation.
4. **Poor Leadership and Toxic Culture:** Causing high staff turnover, failure to build a positive work environment, or lack of capacity to lead through organizational change.
5. **Misalignment with the Board:** Fundamental disagreements with the board on strategic direction, mission, or values.
6. **Lack of Transparency:** Failing to keep the board informed about key activities, results, or potential problems.

One thing is true across all of the above circumstances: a Board's expectations must be clear and understood, and there must be evidence of the failure to meet the expectations. Failure to meet expectations is the foundation for termination. "You have failed to be transparent with us." "You failed to be an ethical steward of our finances." "You failed to follow policies and related expectations."

If the failure is criminal, that's an easier (although potentially more traumatic) circumstance to navigate. But what if an ED has not met expectations, but wants to try harder or wants an opportunity to improve? When that's the case, the most important consideration is the combination of confidence and trust. If a Board has lost confidence and trust in the ED such that it no longer believes that the ED can fix the issues and become successful, then the Board is left with a simple question that gets at the heart of the situation: *Do we believe it is feasible to rebuild confidence and trust with respect to our ED?* If not, then the Board needs to proceed

with a transition. If so, then the Board needs to be clear and honest with the ED regarding the stakes, provide a detailed corrective action plan, and then monitor the progress of the ED.

In the event that the Board has arrived at a decision that it is time to “part ways” with the ED (notice the euphemism, which is being demonstrated for a specific purpose), the Board should attempt to pursue the transition in a way that is positive for the people involved and for the organization’s overall brand and reputation. For example, if the Board rudely handles a transition with its ED, word could get out and potential ED candidates will not be interested to apply because they heard that the Board is unprofessional. It should be the first goal to attempt to navigate a transition professionally and courteously.

The Board President may have the toughest job. He or she may need to have a conversation with the ED that goes something like this, “John, I have some unfortunate news. At this time, the Board has determined that it no longer has confidence that you can, or could, lead the organization to where it needs to go, and the Board is beyond any opportunity to repair that confidence. In the interest in everyone involved, especially the organization, I’d like to ask you for your resignation. We are prepared to provide a severance package as a thank you for your commitment to the organization.”

Obviously that type of approach is not applicable to every situation, but assuming there was nothing criminal, and assuming that there has been some attempt to rectify an ongoing issue or collection of issues, then the above statement could be tailored to apply in most situations. The key is that it is unassailable. First, what ED would want to continue working for a Board that has no confidence in him or her? Second, the statement is not about a specific performance indicator that could be challenged, or about which the ED could argue.

Finally, it is beneficial for the Board to unanimously support the transition. That may not be possible, and the Board will need to know exactly what its hiring and firing protocols are, which may be stated in the Bylaws. If a simple majority vote is required, and a majority is achieved but with outliers, then there may be other work that needs to occur at the Board level to ensure that all Board members share the same vision for the organization and related expectations of the ED role.

In short, terminating an ED is not as simple as terminating an employee who performs a small set of tasks. Terminating an ED should be tied to the organization’s Vision and the Board’s confidence in the ED to achieve the Vision, and be approached strategically to the best possible benefit of the organization and everyone involved.

Want more? Find previous “Capacity Corner” articles addressing a range of organizational development and nonprofit operations issues in earlier editions of the Focus 2.0 newsletter at cafetacenter.net/category/focus-newsletter.

Need help with your specific situation? Reach out to us at cafetacenter@gmail.com to see what we can do for you.

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The CAFÉ TA Center
713 E Park Ave.
Tallahassee, FL 32301
855-CAFÉ-TAC (223-3822)
CAFETACENTER.net

