



# Peer Services: WHY?

A discussion about the value, need and benefits of Peer Run Services in Criminal Justice Services, Crisis Services and Community Behavioral Health Services

# Some History

**PEOPLE, Inc**

Projects to Empower and Organize the Psychiatrically Labeled,  
Inc.

## Mission

Providing education, support and empower people to understand manage and overcome mental health challenges

## **My story:**

From diagnosis to subject matter expert & non-profit entrepreneur

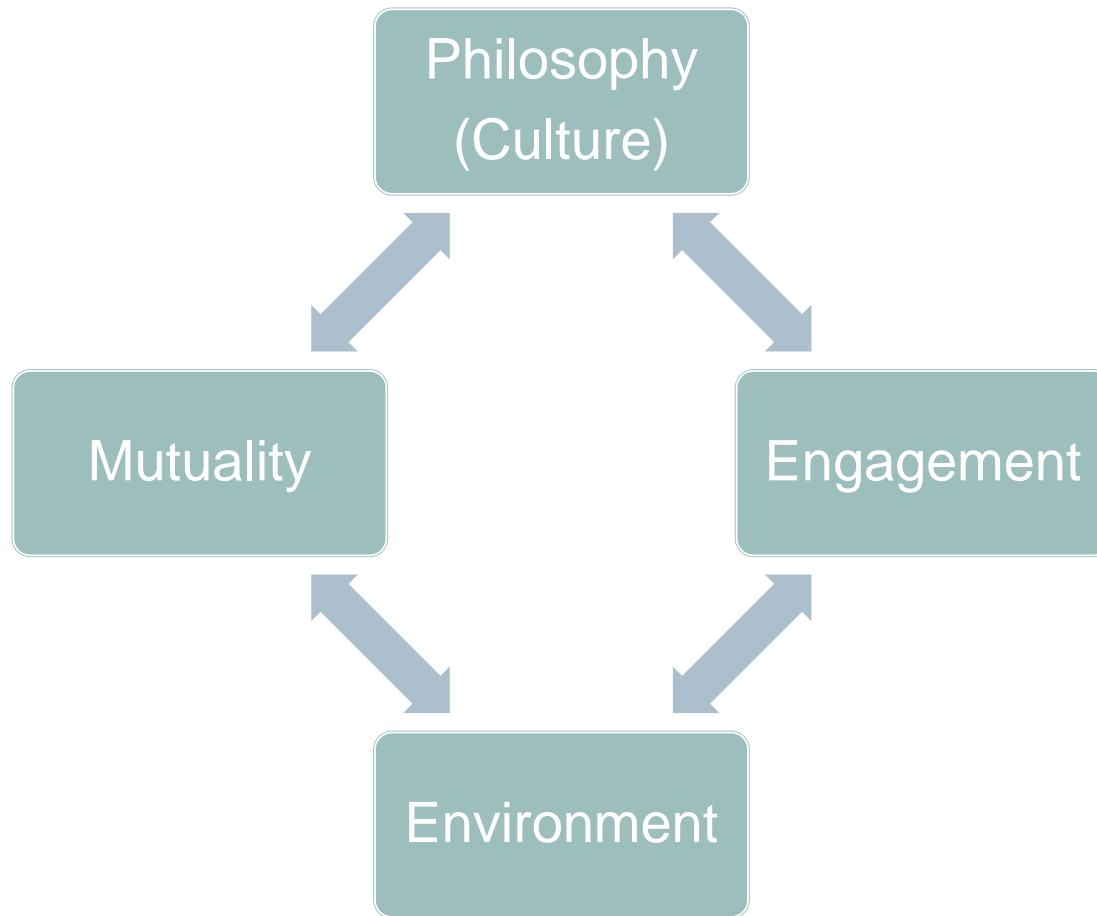
# At a Glance

- Founded 1990 as an Advocacy Org
- Peer Run not for profit
- Started delivering alternative services in mid 90's
- Serving 3,000 people annually in the Hudson Valley Region of New York
- Annual budget of \$4,000,000

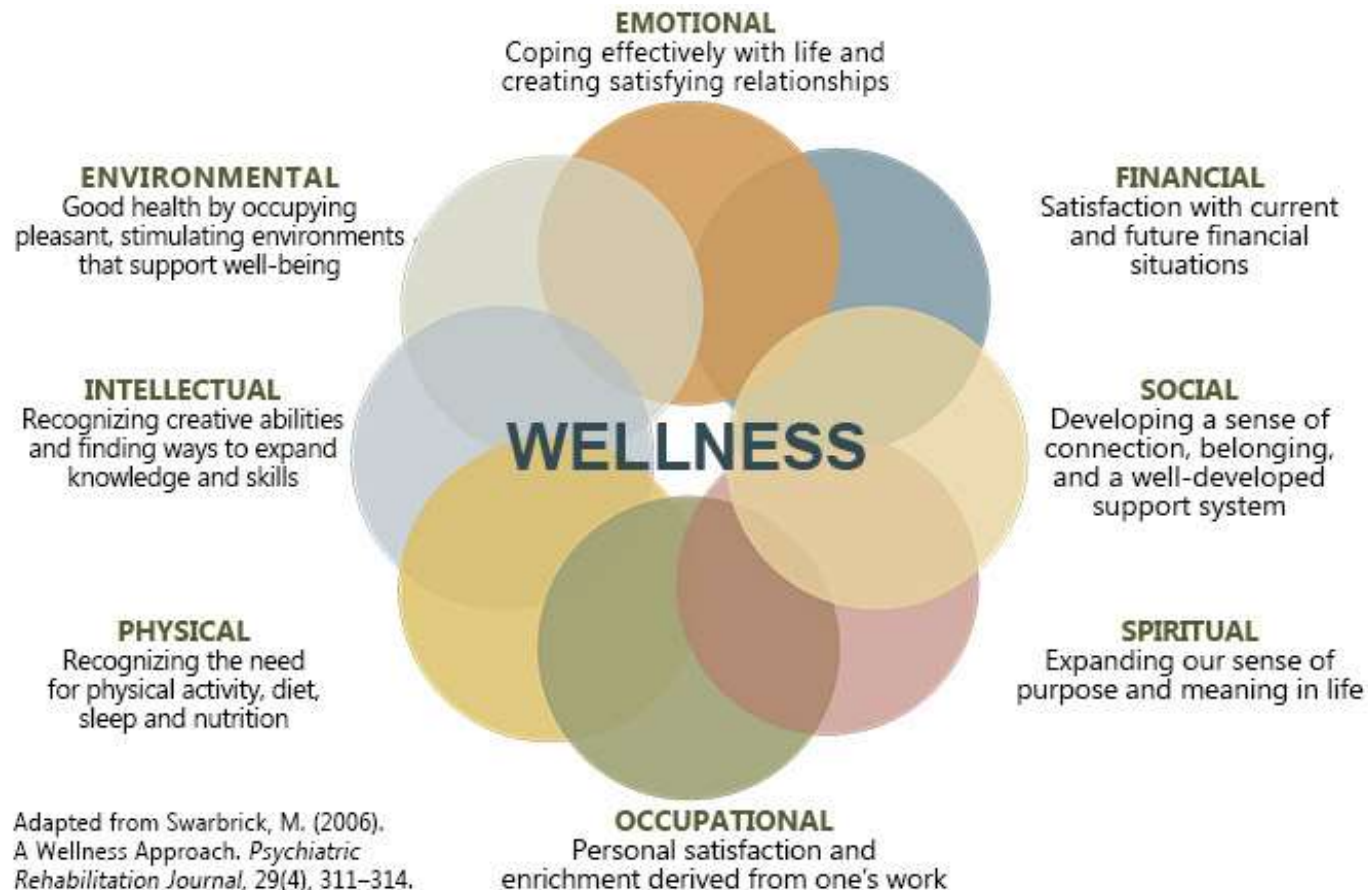
# Adult Services

- 4 Crisis Respite Houses
- Mobile Peer Specialists
- Supported Housing/Housing First/HUD
- Employment Services/Ticket to Work
- Advocacy Specialists
- Emergency Department Advocacy
- Systems Advocacy
- Mentoring
- Criminal Justice Services
- Bridging Services from ED, Jail and Crisis Stabilization

# 4 Vital Components of Success



# 8 Dimensions of Wellness



# Helpful ideas on implementing Peer Services in your area

- Decide first why you want or need peer services
  - Some examples include:
    - building trust within services
    - Using what people in services say what works and what doesn't work
    - Partnering with peers to help mentor others toward wellness
    - Partnering with peers to help bridge people from jail and hospitals successfully
    - Partnering with peers in many behavioral health settings to support trauma informed environments that promote healing, well being and improved relationships between traditional provider and person served
    - Enhancing and improving value based outcomes within the behavioral and criminal justice world

# How to start

- Community forums inviting people with lived experiences and a mix of community providers and services
- Ask the right questions:
  - “If we supported peer services, what would you do?”
  - “How would you like to be supported by the community?”
  - “If you had the power to change behavioral health in our community, what would you do?”
  - “What are your ideas on reducing the jail and prison population of people with mental health and/or substance addiction incarcerated due to misdemeanor crimes?”
  - “How would you like to organize yourselves in our community?”



# Bring in Experts

There are a multitude of local and national experts in our nation that can assist in the development of peer run services. Some examples are but not limited to:

- Consumer Supporter Technical Assistance Center - The Family Cafe - [www.CAFETACenter.net](http://www.CAFETACenter.net)
- Doors to Wellbeing - [www.doorstowellbeing.org](http://www.doorstowellbeing.org)
- National Empowerment Center TAC - [www.power2u.org](http://www.power2u.org)
- National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse - [www.mhselfhelp.org](http://www.mhselfhelp.org)
- Peerlink Technical Assistance Center, a project of MHA of Oregon - [www.peerlinktac.org](http://www.peerlinktac.org)
- STAR Center (Support, Technical Assistance and Resources) [www.consumerstar.org](http://www.consumerstar.org)

# Lessons Learned

- Some peer groups may come across angry and radical. Do not discount their story! Not everyone embraces working with traditional providers or governments.
- Ask for specificity to avoid distraction
- Champions will embrace new relationships and are very supportive of the mission
- Develop clear expectations in partnership with peers in the community in a level playing field
- Stay mission focused on serving the community and improving lives and outcomes
- Avoid stigma/discrimination of people in your community. Embrace differences and listen, listen, listen!

# Lessons Learned

- Assist the peer services with developing infrastructure. Too many peer services have failed due to limited experience and business knowledge
- Allow for autonomy of peer services so that they can maintain the values of mutuality within service delivery
- Embrace the challenges and critique from organized peers as learning opportunities to improve all services
- Educate yourselves on Wellness Recovery Action Plans, Advance Directives, Trauma Informed Care, Motivational Interviewing and Cultural Congruence

# Additional Ideas

- Work with current peer services in the nation that have been successful in designing and implementing services
- Hold a local or national Leadership Academy to help structure the possibilities
- Call me...

# Thank you

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