Peer Specialist Certification

NYS OMH Office of Consumer Affairs

NYAPRS Annual Conference
Sept. 11, 2013
What is Peer Specialist Certification

• Process for acknowledging skills acquired by peers that qualify the to assist another in their recovery journey
• Includes standards for training and experience
• Promotes a skilled workforce
• Allows funding from new sources
• Establishes the qualifications for “professional” recognition for individuals working in the mental health system based on the shared personal experience paradigm
Historical background

• Traditionally persons providing peer to peer services did not require to be certification
• Training and skill development was left up to individual organizations providing services
• Many individuals also sought training through specialty advocacy programs or program such as WRAP, DBSA, etc.
• Funding was primarily through Block Grant or other funding under the control of mental health authorities
• New funding sources such as Medicaid began to require standardization of training and experience
The National Landscape

• Georgia is widely recognized as the first state to certify peer specialist for Medicaid in 2001
• In 2007 CMS issued a State Medicaid Director Letter clarifying:
  – States may opt to provide peer to peer services through Medicaid
  – The following items must be addressed:
    • Supervision – By a competent mental health professional (as defined by the State)
    • Care-Coordination - Within the context of a comprehensive, individualized plan of care that includes specific individualized goals
    • Training and Credentialing – Must be defined by the State, providing peer support providers with a basic set of competencies necessary to perform the peer support function, and include continuing educational requirements
• In 2013 iNAPS issued a draft National Practice Standards
• As of September 2012 there were 36 states that offered a certification program for peer specialist
New York Experience

- A rich history of providing peer to peer services through various non-Medicaid funding sources
- A diverse array of quality training throughout the state
- One of the first states to develop a civil service job class for peer specialist working in OMH facilities
- Between 1997 and 2000 with funding from CMHS New York peers developed a process for Accreditation of peer run programs
- In 2012 the New York State made the decision to move all mental health services into Medicaid Managed Care
- To insure continued opportunities for peer services OMH is developing a Peer Specialist Certification process in conjunction with peer leaders
Issues to be addressed

• Acceptable training
• Required areas of competency
• Practical experience
• Other qualification
  – Education
  – Writing skills
  – Recovery philosophy
  – Personal recovery support
  – References
• Grandfathering of current peer providers
• Code of ethics
• Training for supervisors
• Logistics for issuing certification
• Continuing education/Recertification