

META Peer Employment Training Program
Frequently Asked Questions

1) How would you description the PET program, including training hours, format (group, individual), weeks/days needed for the training, use of continuing education, etc.

The Peer Employment Training is a 70-hour class aimed at preparing individuals diagnosed with serious mental illness to develop skills needed to obtain competitive employment in the field of Peer Support. This training is an excellent opportunity for people with psychiatric experiences to take charge of their own recovery and then give back to their community by helping other individuals do the same. The Peer Employment Training recognizes that there is no better person to inspire hope in an individual new to mental health recovery than someone who has “walked the same path” as that individual. The Peer Support Specialist credential is I.T.E., “I’m the Evidence.”

The Peer Support Training at META Services was conceptualized by two individuals who wanted to make a difference in the way psychiatric services were being provided in Maricopa County, Arizona: Eugene Johnson, President and CEO of META Services and Dr. Lori Ashcraft, the Executive Director of the Recovery Education Center at META Services. META had been in existence since 1990, providing services to people in the community with psychiatric experiences and substance abuse issues. In 2000, Eugene Johnson and Lori Ashcraft came to the conclusion that META’s focus needed to shift from not only on striving for excellence in service delivery but also on re-visioning or transformation of the entire service delivery model.

Believing in the power of peer support, META applied for an establishment grant from Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration to fund the creation of a training center to teach mental health services recipients to work as peer support providers as part of META’s programs and service teams. With a small grant award from RSA, the first class of 15 Peer Support Specialists graduated in October 2000.

Today at META Services, six years after the beginning of Peer Employment Training program, over \$6,000,000 of Medicaid reimbursable peer support services are provided by META’s peer staff.

In addition, META instructors have taught the curriculum in over twelve states, New Zealand, and soon to be Scotland.

Locations where META PET has been delivered:

Location	# of Graduates
Arizona – Maricopa County	675
Other Arizona	55
California	45
Connecticut	25

North Carolina	75
West Virginia	75
New Mexico	30
Michigan	35
New Jersey	22
Alaska	25
Tennessee	20
Washington	35
Wisconsin	20
New Zealand	45
Total	1,182

Class Structure

- 16 modules, 70 hours. Can be delivered as a 2 week, 3 week, or 5 week course.
- Class size; 12 -26 (optimum is 18-20). Learning is highly interactive, competency based, and use adult learning principles.

(2) What are the competencies, content, modules covered in the training

The META PET curriculum is published in a copyrighted 227 page book Peer Employment Training Workbook, 2001, revised 2004. In addition the companion Peer Employment Training Facilitators Guide and Peer Employment Training Supplemental Guide are available for META certified facilitators.

Content of the Training

- Part I: Personal Development; Knowing Yourself
 - Recovery
 - The Power of Peer Support
 - Developing Self Esteem And Managing Self Talk
 - Community, Culture, and Environment
 - Meaning and Purpose
 - Emotional Intelligence
- Part II: Turning Point; Preparing Yourself for Work
 - Telling Your Personal Story
 - Employment as a Path to Recovery
- Part III; Skill Development
 - Communication Skills
 - Conflict Resolution
 - Recovery from Trauma and Developing Resilience
 - Recovery from Substance Abuse
 - Being with People in Challenging Situations
 - Peer Support in Action; Partnering with Professionals
 - Graduation

(3) Who is eligible to participate in the training?

- Enrollment Criteria
 - Mental health lived experience
 - Completed a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)
 - Desire to attend

Funding for the training is provided by mental health organizations implementing a recovery transformation through developing a skilled peer workforce working in peer run services and integrated on traditional teams working in complimentary roles. In Maricopa County the Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (state) pays the tuition for the course.

(4) Is there a certification process, if any, such as exams, attendance, etc., and criteria for "passing"

- Tests are given to establish competency in the required knowledge and skills. An 80% score is required on a comprehensive final exam.
- Attendance standards allow missing three classes with make up homework and tests.
- Graduation event is very important to celebrate success.
- Students meeting the attendance and competency requirements are certified as “Certified Peer Support Specialists”.

(5) Has there been an evaluation of the initiative.

From Hutchinson, Anthony, Aschraft, Johnson, et.al., “The Personal and Vocational Impact of Training and Employing People with Psychiatric Disabilities as Providers.”, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, Winter 2006, Volume 29 Number 3.

This study examined the feasibility of a structured peer provider training program and its effect on peer providers with respect to their own personal and vocational recovery.

Methods: Sixty-six individuals participated in an evaluation of a 60-hour, 5-week long peer training program. Participants were assessed prior to and after the training on scales to measure recovery, empowerment, and self-concept. Analyses of variance were used to examine subjective changes in these measures. Job acquisition and retention data were also examined at posttest.

Results: Participants experienced gains in perceived empowerment, attitudes toward recovery and self-concept. Trainees went on to obtain peer provider positions within the mental health agency in which they received the training and 89% of those trained retained employment at 12 months. Twenty-nine percent of the initial jobs into which the peer providers were placed were full-time; 52% were part-time, and 19% were hourly.

Conclusions: Findings suggest that a standardized program designed to provide peer training was used successfully and participants' recovery and employability were improved."

(6) What are the duties/job responsibilities of trained individuals once they enter the workforce - is training generic or are people being trained to take jobs with specific titles and responsibilities

The META Peer Employment Training is generic, preparing students for employment in a range of peer support jobs. Additional job specific training is provided after the peer is hired. Currently META Services employs over 225 Peer Support Specialists in a range of peer-run programs and in programs in which peers are integrated as part of multi-disciplinary recovery teams.

- Recovery Educators; Wellness Recovery Action Plan, Wellness and Empowerment in Life and Living (WELL), Recovery Instructors in the META Recovery Education Center licensed post-secondary school.
- Recovery Coaches in a range of programs; Peer Recovery Team providing peer support as a case management alternative, Self Directed Recovery Program working as an integrated team member on traditional case management teams.
- Recovery Coach Supported Housing Specialists; Community Building permanent supported housing program; Restart, a temporary apartment living program providing "overnight hospitality" while working out a permanent plan; Another Chance providing mentoring in a HUD funding project for homeless individuals with substance use issues.
- Peer Advocacy Specialists; Peer Support Specialists working in nine units of the county's acute psychiatric inpatient units providing recovery education, discharge recovery planning, peer support, and advocacy support.
- Crisis Peer Specialist; Peer Support Specialists staffing the "Living Room" which provides a recovery alternative to the inpatient subacute crisis center.

(7) Describe the extent to which the initiative and related certification process is consumer-directed.

The Peer Employment Training Workbook was written by mental health peers on the META team and was subsequently revised by a group of peers who had graduated from the course and had been employed as Peer Support Specialists.

(8) Describe how trained individuals will be supervised in their future roles once they enter the workforce? Who will provide the supervision?

At META Services a Peer Support Specialist career ladder has been established with experienced peers providing supervision as Team Leaders and Recovery Services Administrators. This is an important distinguishing feature of the META peer employment experience since "clinical supervision" is not required of peer support workers in Arizona to be reimbursed by Medicaid for "Peer Support". Peer supervisors a provided leadership training in a course, "Leadership Essentials" and are required to

document a minimum of one hour of supervision with each member of their team for every 40 hours worked.

(9) Are you willing to share the curriculum with others, including other consumer groups?

The META curriculum is proprietary and copyrighted, META provides a Peer Employment Training facilitator certification program. Trained facilitators are licensed to use the curriculum within their base of employment and also may teach the course in other settings licensed as META PET facilitators working directly under META's supervision.

(10) Key contact information

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