



Utilizing Peer Support and Recovery With Older Adults

Melissa McHugh, MS, CTRS
Clinical Director, Peer Support Services
Peerstarllc

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction
- II. Facts About Mental Health Problems with Older Adults
- III. What is Peer Support
- IV. About Peerstar
- V. Goals and Objectives of Peer Support
- VI. Facts – Mental Health Issues with Older Adults
- VII. Peer Support With Older Adults – Goals and Objectives

Facts About Mental Health Problems with Older Adults

- *Depression is not a normal part of aging*
- *Depression is widely under diagnosed and under treated in older adults*
- *Depression can mimic dementia*
- *As many as 1 in 5 older adults experience mental health concerns that are not a normal part of aging (anxiety, mood disorders)*
- *Mental health problems can develop later in life*

Facts About Mental Health Problems with Older Adults (Con't)

- *Mental health problems are a risk for older adults, regardless of their history*
- *Suicide is a risk among older adults*
- *Suicide attempts by older adults are more lethal (For age 65+, 1 suicide for every 4 attempts, compared to 1 suicide for every 20 attempts for all other age groups)*
- *Those 85 yrs and older have the highest suicide rate. Ages 75-84 have the second highest*

***Facts About Mental Health Problems with
Older Adults (con't)***

- ***Up to 63% of older adults with a mental health problem do not receive the services they need***
- ***Our health system is not adequately helping older adults with mental health problems***
- ***Medicare covers 80% of physical health problems, but only 50% of mental health disorders***
- ***Older adults have unique mental health needs***

***Facts About Mental Health Problems with
Older Adults (Con't)***

***HEALTHY OLDER ADULTS
CAN CONTINUE TO THRIVE,
GROW, AND ENJOY LIFE!!!!!!***

WHAT IS PEER SUPPORT

- Based on principles of recovery
- Conducted by self-identified current or former consumers of behavioral health services who are trained and certified to offer support and assistance to others in their recovery
- Individualized
- Self-Directed

What is Peer Support (con't)

- Holistic
- Empowerment
- Self-Help
- Self Improvement
- Crisis Support
- Individual Advocacy
- Social Networking

What is Peer Support (Con't)

- Educational Assistance
- Housing Assistance
- Developing a Wellness Recovery Action Plan
- Employment Assistance
- Community Resources

ABOUT PEERSTAR PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

- ***Largest peer support provider by geographic area in Pennsylvania***
- ***Recovery Based Peer Support Services***
- ***Approved in 12 counties in Pennsylvania***
- ***Specialty areas in forensic, substance abuse and geriatric peer support***
- ***Comprehensive Individualized Service Plan***

About Peerstar (Con't)

- *Enlightened Recovery*
- *Community Integration*
- *Empowered Recovery*
- *Best Practice*
- **Counties: *Armstrong, Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clearfield, Franklin, Fulton, Indiana, Jefferson, Potter, and Somerset***

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

- *Provide quality in-home or in-community peer delivered services*
- *Strengthen and maintain peers and their support networks*
- *Encourage the peer to expand support systems in the community*
- *Increase Independence*
- *Improve Self-Worth*

Goals/Objectives (Con't)

- *Increase knowledge of community resources*
- *Improve personal wellness in areas of physical, social, spiritual, mental and emotional*
- *Improve coping skills*
- *Develop and practice healthy leisure skills*
- *Develop/improve social skills*
- *Decrease depression in older adults*

Goals/Objectives (Con't)

- *Increase ability to make informed, independent choices*
- *Increase ability prevent/cope with relapse*
- *Empower peer to reach their own recovery goals*
- *Develop/maintain positive social support network*
- *Decrease incidence of inpatient hospitalization and use of crisis services*

PEER SUPPORT WITH OLDER ADULTS

WHERE

- *In-home*
- *Personal Care Homes*
- *Assisted Living Facilities*
- *Retirement Communities*

Goals and Objectives Of PEER SUPPORT WITH OLDER ADULTS

- *Support for Grief and Loss*
- *Develop/maintain leisure interests within peers' physical limitations*
- *Increase knowledge of community resources available to older adults*
- *Provide support with issues of aging*
- *Improve/maintain cognitive skills*
- *Increase natural supports*

**Goals and Objectives of Peer Support
with Older Adults (con't)**

- *Decrease social isolation*
- *Increase knowledge of resources for mental health issues with older adults (depression, anxiety, etc)*
- *Decrease depression in older adults*
- *Provide support and assistance for peers in becoming involved with senior centers, volunteer work, and other community activities*
- *Increase self-worth*

**Goals/Objectives of
Peer Support for Older Adults (con't)**

- *Assist peers in obtaining access to services for older adults*
- *Assist peers in advocating for themselves with physicians, therapists, and other treatment providers*
- *Assist peers in learning about signs and symptoms of depression*
- *Decrease likelihood of injuries due to falls by assisting the peer in increasing their activity level*

**Goals and Objectives of Peer Support
with Older Adults (con't)**

- *Assist peers in learning about laws protecting the well being of older adults*
- *Increase awareness of addiction issues with older adults, and link with appropriate resources*
- *Assist peers in learning about legal assistance available to them (POA, Advanced Directives, Wills, etc)*
- *Increase independence in the community*

SUMMARY

Older adults have the right to have a voice in their own recovery, and to be empowered to live vital, active and productive lives.

Peer support for older adults provides a major source of support and hope, as they realize they can travel the road to recovery with someone who has been there.

RESOURCES

The Vintage Guide to Housing and Services; 10 Facts about Mental Health and Aging; Life Senior Services, Inc, 2008-2009. www.seniorline.org

Healthy Aging; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth



Contact Information

Toll Free: 1-888-733-7781