



Peer Support Mentor

Job Description

The Mental Health Empowerment Project, Inc. (MHEP) is a not-for-profit agency organized in 1988 to develop and strengthen self-help and mutual support activities throughout The United States. MHEP is generally focused on offering skill building activities and education related to self help, mutual support and recovery; organizing people to create desired change in their own lives and in their communities; creating and delivering workshops and skill building seminars that help individuals find and connect with their personal power and the power of self help. At this time, MHEP has full and part-time job openings for Peer Support Mentors in Albany, Rensselaer and Westchester/Rockland counties.

Position summary

The Peer Support Mentor (PSM) is an active member of the Advocacy Services Department and provides peer support services to persons diagnosed with mental health challenges. With supervision, the Peer Support Mentor will function as a role model to peers; exhibiting competency in personal recovery and use of coping skills; serve as an advocate, providing information and peer support for people in outpatient and inpatient settings. The PSM performs a wide range of tasks to assist peers of all ages, from young adult to older age, in regaining independence within the community and mastery over their own recovery process. He/she works within the guidelines, policies and mission of the organization and will be accountable and responsible for specific projects as assigned.

Duties and Responsibilities

Using a formal goal setting process, the PSM will:

- Assist peers in articulating personal goals for recovery through the use of one-to-one and group sessions. During these sessions the PSM will support peers in identifying and creating goals and developing recovery plans with the skills, strengths, supports and resources to aid them in achieving those goals
- Assist peers in working with their case manager or treatment team in determining the steps he/she needs to take in order to achieve these goals and self-directed recovery.

- Assist peers in setting up and sustaining self-help (mutual support) groups, as well as means of locating and joining existing groups.
- Utilize tools such as the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) to assist peers in creating their own individual wellness and recovery plans. Utilize and teach problem solving techniques with individuals and groups; discussions will be utilized where peers will share common problems in daily living and methods they have employed to manage and cope with these problems. As one who has availed themselves to mental health services, the PSM will share their own experiences and what skills, strengths, supports and resources they use. As much as possible, the PSM will share their own recovery story and as the facilitator of these sessions, will demonstrate how they have directed their own recovery.
- Use ongoing individual and group sessions to teach peers how to identify and combat negative self-talk and how to identify and overcome fears by providing a forum which allows group members and PSM to share their experiences. By using identified literature, media, etc. peers will gain hope, learn to identify their strengths and combat negative self-talk.
- Support peers' vocational choices and assist them in choosing a job that matches their strengths, overcoming job-related anxiety by reviewing job applications, and providing interview tips.
- Assist peers in building social skills in the community that will enhance job acquisition and tenure

Utilizing their recovery experience, the PSM will:

- Teach and role model the value of every individual's recovery experience.
- Assist the peer in obtaining housing of his/her choice in the most integrated, independent, and least intrusive or restrictive environment by taking them out to view housing, either driving them or riding with them on public transportation.
- The PSM models effective coping techniques and self-help strategies.
- Serve as a support in recovery by providing and advocating for any effective recovery based services that will aid the peer in daily living.
- Assist in obtaining services that suit that individual's recovery needs by providing names of staff, community resources and groups that may be useful. Inform peers about community and natural supports and how to use these in the recovery process. Community resources may include but not limited to: social security office, Department of Family and Children services, local YMCA, Library, restaurants, peers' service organizations, apartment complexes and other types of housing, etc.
- Assist peers in developing empowerment skills and combating stigma through self-advocacy. This will be accomplished through regular meetings, individual or group sessions. Through the use of role

play/modeling techniques the PSM provides opportunities for others to show/demonstrate how they have handled similar problems, how to present themselves in certain situations, or how to handle problems that may arise in interactions with others. With assistance from the Program Manager/Coordinator, the Peer Support Mentor will work with the peers and other treatment team staff to develop a treatment/recovery plan based on each peer's identified goals. The PSM will document the following on a peer one-to-one document:

1. Identified person-centered strengths, needs, abilities, and recovery goals.
 2. Support to assist the peer with reaching their goals for recovery.
 3. Progress made toward goals.
- The PSM will maintain a working knowledge of current trends and developments in the mental health and substance abuse fields by reading books, journals, and other relevant materials. The PSM will continue to share recovery materials with others at continuing education seminars and other venues to be developed to support recovery-oriented services; and attend continuing education seminars and other in-service training when offered and approved.

Knowledge Required by the Position

- Knowledge of the Recovery process and the ability to facilitate recovery using established MHEP processes.
- Knowledge and skill to teach and engage in basic problem solving strategies to support individual peers in self-directed recovery.
- Knowledge of the signs and symptoms of mental illness (i.e. auditory and visual hallucinations, aggressive talk and behavior, thoughts of self-harm or harm towards others, isolation) and the ability to assist the peer to address symptoms using strategies such as positive self-talk.
- Knowledge and skill sufficient to use community resources necessary for independent living and ability to teach those skills to other individuals with severe mental illness. Community resources may include but are not limited to: social security office, Department of Family and Children services, local YMCA, Library, restaurants, peers' service organizations, housing providers, etc. The PSM may accompany peers to community resources to assist them in accessing these resources.
- Knowledge of how to establish and sustain self-help (mutual support) and educational groups by soliciting input from the mental health consumers on their strengths and interests.

Qualifications

The ideal candidate will have direct, personal experience using mental health services and modeling principles of recovery and wellness. They will

be an active team member, offering support and assistance to ongoing projects. Additionally, this person will be able to work independently on projects and meet deadlines. The ability to demonstrate knowledge of job duties through follow-up and accurate record keeping is also important.

MHEP highly values the benefits of peer support and self help. Our ideal candidate will be a person who self identifies as a person who has direct personal experience living a life of recovery, overcoming the challenges resulting from a diagnosis of mental illness. The candidate must have sufficient personal knowledge of recovery, overcoming the challenges resulting from a diagnosis of mental illness to assist others with recovery.

A clean, valid NYS drivers' license, a personal vehicle and absence of felony convictions are also required.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commitment

MHEP is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer. The agency is dedicated to the goal of building a culturally diverse and pluralistic staff committed to working in a multicultural environment and strongly encourages applications from women, minorities, individuals with disabilities and protected veterans.

***Interested applicants should submit a cover letter and current resume to:
Tanya Stevens tstevens@mhepinc.org***