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ADULT PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST TRAINING

- 30 hr Core Curriculum
- To satisfy the KY state requirements from Adult Peer Support Specialist (APSS) certification

The 6 Core Competencies for APSS Certification

- 1. Problem Solving
- 2. Wellness Recovery Action Plan (aka W.R.A.P)
- 3. Stages in the Recovery Process
- 4. Effective Listening Skills
- 5. Establishing Recovery Goals
- 6. Using Support Groups to Promote and Sustain Recovery

What is a “competency”?

A competency combines skills, behaviors, knowledge, and abilities that enables an employee to effectively perform their job

ESTABLISHING RECOVERY GOALS

APSS Core Competency #5

DECIDING THE LIFE ONE WANTS: DETERMINING ONE'S RECOVERY GOAL

Why is goal setting important in behavioral health?

Goal setting is one such strategy that assists individuals to identify specific behaviors to change and how to go about doing so. For many, however, simply setting a goal seldom leads to actual behavior change

3 WAYS GOALS MAY BE MANIFESTED

- 1) Getting rid of something because the presence is keeping you from having the life you want. **Example: Quitting a smoking habit because it leaves you with no money.**
- 2) Getting something you don't have because its absence is keeping you from having the kind of life you want. **Example: Getting a license back so you can work a better job.**
- 3) Identifying something to work for that would begin to symbolize the kind of life they would want. **Example: Making a decision to get a GED.**

5 QUESTIONS PEER SUPPORTS COULD ASK TO EXPLORE SETTING GOALS (WANTS & NEEDS)

- 1) If you could wave a magic wand and change the part of your life into what you would want it to be, what would that look like? **Example answer: "I'd have a job, a home, and my kids back."**
- 2) If you did not have a behavioral health diagnosis, what would you be doing that you can't do now? **Example answer: "Being able to enjoy little things and not be so stressed."**
- 3) Describe what a perfect day look like to you now. **Example answer: "Going to a meeting to start my day, then work, then home to my family, and then watch TV together until bedtime."**
- 4) What would be the benefits of making a change be? **Example answer: "I'd feel more empowered and better about myself."**
- 5) What are the costs of not making a change? **Example answer: "I'd stay mad at myself because I'm shortchanging myself and not addressing fears."**

3 QUESTIONS TO ASK A CLIENT TO TARGET A GOAL-SETTING AREA

1) What area(s) of your life/situation are you pleased with or feel good about now?

Example answer: “My family is supportive of my recovery”

2) What area(s) of your life/situation are you NOT pleased with or feel good about now?

Example answer: “My kids are in foster care now.”

3) What area(s) of your life are you willing to deal with now?

Example answer: “My tendency to go back to active addiction when I get frustrated.”

5 STEPS TO ACCOMPLISHING A GOAL

1) State in a clear and positive way WHAT you want to accomplish.

Example answer: “I want to get a better job where I already work”

2) State in a clear way WHY you you want this ?

Example answer: “I want to make more money and have more work responsibility.”

3) State what you are going to have to change to get this.

Example answer: “I need to stop being scared of my boss and sit down and talk with them.”

4) Understand your strength and limitations.

Example answer: “I’m going to write down and verbalize what I believe my strengths and limitations are with my peer support”

5) List ways of self-care as you accomplish this.

Example answer: “Daily check-ins.”

4 FACTS ABOUT ACCOMPLISHING GOALS

1) Accomplishing a goal always changes our current situation.

Example: “I got a better job and now I have more money and work better hours”

2) Sustaining change involves changing the way we think and act.

Example: “I’m never going to make it OK for me to be late or miss work anymore”

3) Our actions help create or sustain our current situation.

Example: “I have and have had more control over my current situation than I have admitted.”

4) Become aware of how our external environment impacts our current situation.

Example: “Show me your friends and I’ll show you your future, turned out to be true.”

WHAT IS “FEAR” IN REGARDS TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH?

Fear is a feature of nearly all clinical mental health problems and is a root cause of some of the most common ones. As well as anxiety disorders themselves, fear is strongly associated with depression, psychosis, and attempting suicide in the past year. Fear is also strongly linked to poor physical health and an impediment to setting/accomplishing goals.

5 QUESTIONS TO HELP IDENTIFY FEARS

- 1) If you were not afraid, what would you do? *SAMPLE ANSWER: Assert myself.*
- 2) Why would you like to do this? *SAMPLE ANSWER: I feel I cut myself short in life.*
- 3) What are getting out of staying in your comfort zone? *SAMPLE ANSWER: Predictability .*
- 4) What is it costing you to stay in your comfort zone? *SAMPLE ANSWER: Self-esteem.*
- 5) What would be the biggest benefit in moving through this fear? *SAMPLE ANSWER: Confidence and higher self-worth.*

5 QUESTIONS TO HELP MOVE THROUGH FEARS

- 1) How does experiencing that fear make you feel? SAMPLE ANSWER: Trapped and hopeless.
- 2) What are the specific emotions/physical sensations are you feeling? SAMPLE ANSWER: I start sweating and breathing hard.
- 3) What are the thoughts that come to mind in that situation? SAMPLE ANSWER: I start hearing negative things about myself that I heard as a kid .
- 4) What have you learned from past experiences about how to successfully address these thoughts and feelings? SAMPLE ANSWER: That not everyone is against me.
- 5) What kind of small steps could you make to help address these feelings? SAMPLE ANSWER: Journaling so I can see my negative thoughts on paper.

5 SITUATIONS TO OVERCOME AMBIVALENCE FOR CHANGE

- 1) The greater the satisfaction, the more likely a person will want to make a change. The pain needs to be bad enough to create real desire. “The gift of desperation.”
- 2) The benefits of making a change is what motivates a person to act. Especially when they see examples of people of have changed and benefitted.
- 3) In order to see possibilities, a person needs to see that there is something they can do to start the process. Just identifying the first small steps help to make one realize possibilities.
- 4) There are always barriers or the change would have already happened. But don't assume all barriers are out of your control or can't be overcome. Often times, barriers are internal.
- 5) Nobody makes major changes by themselves. Even though its been tried a million times to handle things by ourselves, getting help makes success more likely.

5 QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS DISSATISFACTION

- 1) What does this keep you from doing that you'd like to do? It is important to not minimize the desire that is being inhibited. Is this an internal issue or an external one?
- 2) What would you need to do to get started? Use pen and paper on this and **ONLY** list what is needed to get started and nothing more at this point. This is a step by step process.
- 3) Who would support you in doing this? It is important to recognize and identify persons who would support a change and those who would have a problem with it.
- 4) Who would **NOT** support you in doing this? Again, to deny or hide from any reality that there may be adversaries set you up for failure and emotional harm.
- 5) What would you need to learn to overcome these difficulties? Make a list with two columns - one for internal things to learn, and one for external things to learn (like taking a skills class).

What Is Negative Self-Talk?

Negative self-talk is when your inner voice is excessively critical. It is pessimistic and focuses on the bad. It erodes your confidence and stops you from reaching your potential. It can make you feel like you are going to fail before you start.

3 Characteristics Of Negative Self-Talk

- 1) Everyone has some negative thoughts/negative-self talk. Some is normal.
- 2) Negative thoughts/self-talk becomes a problem when it spirals downward and we end up defining ourselves in absolute negative language.
- 3) Thoughts create feelings so we can use our feelings as a cue to recognize what we are telling ourselves.

The Connection Between Thoughts And Feelings

Feelings are simply your body's reaction to what you are THINKING, whether you're thinking on purpose or not. Your belief system and other unconscious thoughts are happening on autopilot all the time, and often cause emotions. That's why sometimes you have NO IDEA why you feel the way you do.

How facts turn into “stories”

Negative self-talk can turn into a destructive filter of gathering evidence to further a negative self perception. For example: “I failed a test” turns into “I am a failure”.

The Power Of Absolute/Permanent Language

Words such as “always” and “never” when used to describe yourself or someone else suggests that where they are currently is fixed and terminally predictable. Absolute Language makes an exaggerated, overblown, and probably untrue claim. It admits of no exceptions, and it seems to forbid doubt or questions.

3 Questions To Ask To Help Someone Identify Negative Self-Talk

- 1) What are some negative thoughts or thought patterns that keep you from accomplishing some of the things that you want to do?
- 2) When you feel mad at yourself what have you been thinking?
- 3) Are your thoughts facts or are you telling yourself a negative-self story?

RECOGNIZING NEGATIVE SELF-TALK AND STOPPING IT

- 1) Catch it early on such as hearing a client using defeating language during shares.
- 2) Check it with what's really going on by having the client expand on what they are saying.
- 3) Change it to more reflect reality by repeating what they say in a more appropriate, reality based manner.

RECOVERY STORIES VS. ILLNESS STORIES IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Recovery Story

- About overcoming challenges
- Focus on choices and responsibility
- Emphasis on strengths and opportunities

Illness Story

- About challenges
- Focuses on symptoms and treatment
- Emphasis on deficiencies and problems

Illness stories focus on weaknesses and treatments; recovery stories focus on strengths and a meaningful life

RECOVERY STORIES VS. ILLNESS STORIES IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

With shared lived experience at the core of peer support, storytelling is crucial. This not only helps the connection between the peer support and the client, but it is also a very useful tool to educate help providers who do not have lived experience. But knowing when and how to share your story is an important piece of supporting others and building a connection.

Storytelling in a peer support specialist role is not about sharing "war stories." Talking only about the worst things that have happened to you or identifying with everything a person says can feel invalidating and sometimes even seem like a competition for who had it worse.

Instead of focusing only on diagnoses or negative experiences, it's important to also focus on your successes, the barriers you have overcome, and what has helped you. The goal of peer support is not to reinforce negative messages a person has already heard or challenges a person has experienced but to validate them, provide hope, and support them in moving towards what they want.

HOW PEER SUPPORT EFFECTIVELY TELLS THEIR STORY

Your recovery story is a personal account of your experience with substance abuse. But it doesn't just detail your life in active addiction. It should also recount how you overcame challenges to gain hope and freedom in your recovery.

HOW PEER SUPPORT EFFECTIVELY TELLS THEIR STORY

Thought starters:

- Were there early signs that you were struggling with addiction?
- Do you remember what your situation was like at its worst?
- Was there a person or circumstance that helped you realize you needed to break free?
- What was the first step in moving from where you were to where you are now?
- Who helped or supported you during your recovery journey? What did they do?
- What are some of the things you had to overcome to get where you are?
- Have you learned anything new about yourself now that you're in the recovery process?
- What are some new strengths or skills you've developed?
- Have your plans and hopes for the future changed now that you are in recovery?

HOW PEER SUPPORT EFFECTIVELY TELLS THEIR STORY

TIPS:

- Consider why you've decided to tell your story. Is there an issue or situation you can address that would help others in similar circumstances?
- Convey a message that is important to you.
- Think carefully about which details you're comfortable sharing.
- Don't feel like you have to water down your story.
- Include specific details and emotions attached to your experience.
- Don't edit your story as you write. Let it all flow out without going back and fine-tuning.
- When you're ready to edit your story, leave it for a period of time so you can come back and look at it objectively, without the raw emotion you may have experienced when writing it down.

HOW PEER SUPPORT EFFECTIVELY TELLS THEIR STORY

Exercise: Pick 3 questions from pg. 21 the “Thought Starter” page, and write down your answers as if you were speaking to a recovery group.