Forensic Peer Support through Trauma Informed Care in a Mental Health Court

RECOVERY IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: A NECESSITY

Intermountain Mental Health Court Conference
July 10, 2014 | 10:15 to 11:30 am

Andrew Logan, Valley Cities Counseling and Consultation
Robyn Dunning, Valley Cities Counseling and Consultation
Hon. Michael Finkle, King County District Court
Jesse Benet, King County Criminal Justice Initiatives
• Participants will identify both challenges and benefits to implementing forensic peer support in their Mental Health Courts.

• Participants will have clear understanding of the necessity of implementing peer support within a Trauma Informed Care (TIC) framework and the need for TIC training for all court team members.

• Participants will hear directly from a forensic peer support staff person working in a MHC and role definition.
Definitions and Framework of Recovery

- Bringing Recovery into the MHC culture
- Trauma Informed Care foundation
- Forensic Peer as part of clinical team in MHC
- Reentry via the APIC Model
- Focus on providing Incentives instead of threatening punishment
Guiding Principles of Recovery

- There are many pathways to recovery.
- Recovery is self-directed and empowering.
- Recovery involves a personal recognition of the need for change and transformation.
- Recovery is holistic.
- Recovery has cultural dimensions.
- Recovery exists on a continuum of improved health and wellness.
- Recovery is supported by peers and allies.
- Recovery emerges from hope and gratitude.
- Recovery involves a process of healing and self-redefinition.
- Recovery involves addressing discrimination and transcending shame and stigma.
- Recovery involves (re)joining and (re)building a life in the community.
- Recovery is a reality. It can, will, and does happen.

What does it mean to be Trauma-Informed?

- Judge’s perspective on TIC
- “What happened to you?” is trauma-informed vs “What’s wrong with you?”

Forensic Peer Support Specialists

an individual who has successfully completed their court requirements or has CJ history as well as walking their own pathway of recovery

**Certifications** ➔ in addition to earning their (WA) state required certification, they have begun the process of getting their *Affiliated Registration (WA State)* and fulfill ongoing requirements
Forensic Peers – Telling The Story

• Through the use of their own experience forensic peers can share strength and hope with other consumers.

• Forensic Peers work alongside professional staff provide living proof that recovery is possible.

• Raise morale by providing evidence to service providers that people can and do recover and provide a living example of hope for others with mental health conditions and past criminal justice involvement.
## The APIC Model reentry needs checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RE-ENTRY NEEDS:</th>
<th>Name of Facility: SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Medications</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse Services</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family/Relationships</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic Living</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Housing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Food/Clothing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Transportation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
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<tr>
<td>School/Work</td>
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<td>Social/Fun</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Health Care Benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Financial Benefits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Dentist</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Primary Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Eye Doctor</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Pharmacy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

FPSP Staff Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________
FPSP Participant Signature: ______________________ Date: __________
Breakout Group

Please group up with others from your jurisdiction
- or –
Groups of three to four from various jurisdictions

- Identify **three** challenges you may have introducing forensic peers in your MHC team
- Identify **three** benefits of having forensic peers on your MHC team
# Language MATTERS!

## Bringing Recovery-Oriented Language to the Mental Health Court IS being Trauma-Informed!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demeaning, dehumanizing</th>
<th>Recovery-oriented, humane</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Criminal</td>
<td>• Defendant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Drug Addict</td>
<td>• A person using drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inadequate</td>
<td>• Struggling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bad/Loser</td>
<td>• Human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Failures</td>
<td>• Teachable Moments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-Compliance</td>
<td>• Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Crazy</td>
<td>• Terrified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficult</td>
<td>• Confused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resistant</td>
<td>• TRAUMA response(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Incentives vs Threat of Punishment

Incentive Programs

- food and clothing gift cards
- bus tickets
- used in treatment (by provider)
- Kudos from Judge
- GOOD JOB cards from entire MHC team (attorneys, probation, Judge, etc.)
Training and Hiring Forensic Peers

- **Internal Peer Support Training**
  - Assure and sustain our recovery culture
  - Provides a forensic module specific to the criminal justice system
  - The culture of the criminal justice system- identify the hidden and “unspoken” rules of the criminal justice system and language
  - To help identify and support role for Peer- HOPE

- **External Trainings**
Supervising the Forensic Peer

- Based in the principles of Recovery
- Quality Education is KEY
- Trauma Stewardship
- Being Trauma Informed
Forensic Peers & Court

- Court Room Culture
- Proceeding Is Fast
- Speaking in Legal Words vs. Terms That You Can Understand.
- Public Humiliations
- Often the court may not be prepared and a continuance will be given, which lengthens your time in jail.
Challenges We Encountered

- **Stigma**: The criminal justice system often times does not effectively identify mental health symptoms and criminalizes instead.
- Introducing peers in the CJ system
- Acceptance of peers by other MHC-team members (making referrals)
Challenges - cont.

- Lack of Housing and Employment
- Lack of Medication Access
- Continued Contact with Client upon release
Questions and Contact info

Robyn Dunning
Manager
Valley Cities Counseling and Consultation
rdunning@valleycities.org

Andrew Logan
Forensic Peer specialist
King County Regional Mental Health Court
alogan@valleycities.org

Jesse Benet, M.A., LMHC
Coordinator | Criminal Justice Initiatives Project
King County Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division
www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/MHSA/CriminalJustice.aspx
401 5th Avenue, Suite 400, Seattle, WA 98104
(206) 263-8956 jesse.benet@kingcounty.gov

Judge Michael Finkle
King County District Court
East Division, Redmond Courthouse
8601 160th Avenue NE
Redmond, WA 98052
(206) 477-2121
michael.finkle@kingcounty.gov