The History of the Consumer Movement and Peer Supports

Presented by Patrick Hendry
History

- The modern peer support movement began to organize in the 1970’s
- Thousands of patient/inmates were released into the community
- The funds that had been spent on hospitals and asylums did not follow them into those communities.
- Communities were unable to provide care and often did not want the ex-patient/survivors living in their towns and cities.
History

• Ex-patients began to meet in small groups.
• Developed self-help groups
• Talked about their experiences in the mental health system
• Began to organize around change.
• Some wanted nothing to do with the system.
• Others wanted to build a better system of care
History

• In the late 70’s and early 80’s the idea of peer provided supports and services was born.

• Awareness of the violation of civil rights and social justice accelerated change.

• People began to talk about the need for peer involvement and empowerment within the mental health system.
Experiences

Peer provided services increase:

• Ease of engagement with people
• Increased participant satisfaction with services
• People are more likely to fully participate in services
• People stay in services for increased amounts of time.
Experiences

- Need for education for traditional mental health care providers.
  - Supervision
  - Boundaries
  - Clear delineation of the role of the peer specialist
  - Peer workers deserve the same respect as any other mental health team member.
  - Provision of support for peer workers
  - Fair pay for each level of peer workforce
What we have now!

The expanding influence of the consumer/survivor movement is responsible for the creation of so many of the positive peer run programs that exist today.

Without our incredible and productive work we would never have developed programs like peer specialists, peer run crisis services, respite facilities, peer run employment and education services, drop-in centers, and many others.
What we have now!

• Peer and Recovery Support Specialists
• Forensic Support Specialists
• Substance Abuse Support Specialists
• Homeless Support Specialists
• Bridgers
• Self-Directed Care Coaches
• Peer run Drop-In Centers
• Peer run Employment Services
• Peer run Supported Education Services
What we have now

- Peer run Self-Directed Care programs
- Peer run Warm Lines
- Peer run Crisis Lines
- Peer involvement in Crisis Intervention
- Peer run Respite Facilities
- Peer run Crisis Units
- Peer run Housing Services
Expansion of the Peer Workforce

- We are standing on the brink of major change.
- Tearing down traditional boundaries.
- Value added to services.
- We are finding new, more relevant ways to measure success in the provision of services.

Are Lives Getting Better Because of the Services We Provide?