

Selected Resources for Peer Support

Articles

- *Approaches and Challenges to Integrating Peer Support into Primary Care Services* (http://peersforprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/20140205_wg5_approaches_and_challenges_to_integrating_peer_support_and_primary_care_services.pdf)
- Parry M, Watt-Watson J. Peer support intervention trials for individuals with heart disease: a systematic review. *Eur J Cardiovasc Nurs.* Mar 2010;9(1):57-67.
- Campbell HS, Phaneuf MR, Deane K. Cancer peer support programs-- do they work? *Patient Educ Couns.* 2004;55(1):3-15.
- Thom DH, Ghorob A, Hessler D, De Vore D, Chen E, Bodenheimer TA. Impact of peer health coaching on glycemic control in low-income patients with diabetes: a randomized controlled trial. *Annals of family medicine.* Mar 2013;11(2):137-144.
- Hartzler Andrea, Pratt Wanda. Managing the Personal Side of Health: How Patient Expertise Differs from the Expertise of Clinicians. *Journal of Medical Internet Research.* 2011;13(3):e62. <http://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.1728>. [PMC free article] [PubMed]

Websites

- **Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care**
<http://www.ipfcc.org/bestpractices/peer-support.html>
- **Peers for Progress (Primary Care Resources)**
<http://peersforprogress.org/tools-training/primary-care/>

National Programs Offering Peer Support

- **Alzheimer's**
 - Alzheimer's Foundation of America (www.alzfdn.org)
- **Asthma and Allergy**
 - Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (www.aafa.org)
- **Cancer**
 - National Cancer Institute (www.supportorgs.cancer.org)
 - American Cancer Society (www.acs.org)
- **Cardiovascular Disease**
 - Mended Hearts (www.mendedhearts.org)
- **Children with Special Needs**
 - Parent to Parent USA (www.p2pusa.org)
- **Diabetes**
 - JDRF (www.jdrf.org)
- **Grief and Bereavement**
 - Option B (www.optionb.org)
- **Mental Illness**
 - NAMI (www.nami.org)
- **Variety of Diseases**
 - Smart Patients (www.smartpatients.com)

Note: In addition to these national programs, many local hospitals and communities have peer support programs.

PEER SUPPORT

ENHANCING CARE FOR PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

"I really, really needed to be able to talk to somebody who had experienced this. The medical and rehab staff were wonderful, my family was wonderful, but I just needed that connection to somebody who knew what I was going through."

- Judy Crane,
Stroke Survivor & Founding Mentor, *Power of 2*

A collaboration of



Patient-Centered
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Patients with chronic conditions like diabetes . . . family caregivers struggling with Alzheimer’s or mental illness . . . parents of children with disabilities . . . even recently bereaved families. These are all people who seek expertise and help from your practice.

As a primary care or ambulatory care provider, you know how complex it is to “manage” certain diseases and conditions. You recognize that patients are impacted not only by physical symptoms but also emotional ones. And, you realize that their families are affected, too. But, sometimes, providing support for all this feels like it stretches the capacity of your practice or clinic.

Peer support can be a resource that will help your patients – and enhance the care you can provide.

What is Peer Support?

Peer support services are delivered by trained individuals who have common life experiences (e.g., a shared chronic health condition) with the people they are serving – someone who has “walked in their shoes.”

It’s a way of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful.

Peer support can be provided in various ways – one-on-one or in groups, in person or by telephone or even email.

What Are the Benefits of Peer Support?

Based on research supported by *Peers for Progress*, funded by the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation, we know that peer support benefits patients and families, providers, and the overall healthcare system.

Peer support:

- Helps people prevent disease and manage chronic diseases
- Helps people cope with stress or emotional and psychological challenges
- Engages populations that are not usually reached by health care systems and interventions

How Can Peer Support Programs Enhance the Care Provided in Practices and Clinics?

Peer support is grounded in the principles of person-centered care and of the Patient-Centered Medical Home. Peer support is identified – explicitly and implicitly – in a number of TCPIs change concepts and tactics for person and family-centered care design. For example, peer support for self-management is directly tied to collaboration with patients and families, enhancement/expansion of practice teams, and collaboration with community partners.



Credit: Joan Forté, MBA, BSN, JForté Consulting, fortejoan@gmail.com

Introducing Peer Support as Part of Your Practice

Begin with some simple, manageable steps, including:

1. Ensure that you and other clinicians in your practice understand the potential benefits of peer support for patients (see “Selected Resources” on the following page)
2. Include readiness/willingness to utilize peer support in your regular patient assessments. Develop a few questions to use in exploring peer support with patients, e.g., *Some patients find it helpful to talk to someone who has the same condition/disease that they do. Is that something that would interest you?*
3. Be aware of national peer support programs that may have chapters or affiliates in your community or region