What Peer Support Specialists Need to Know about Telehealth in the Current Crisis - Part 2

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Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
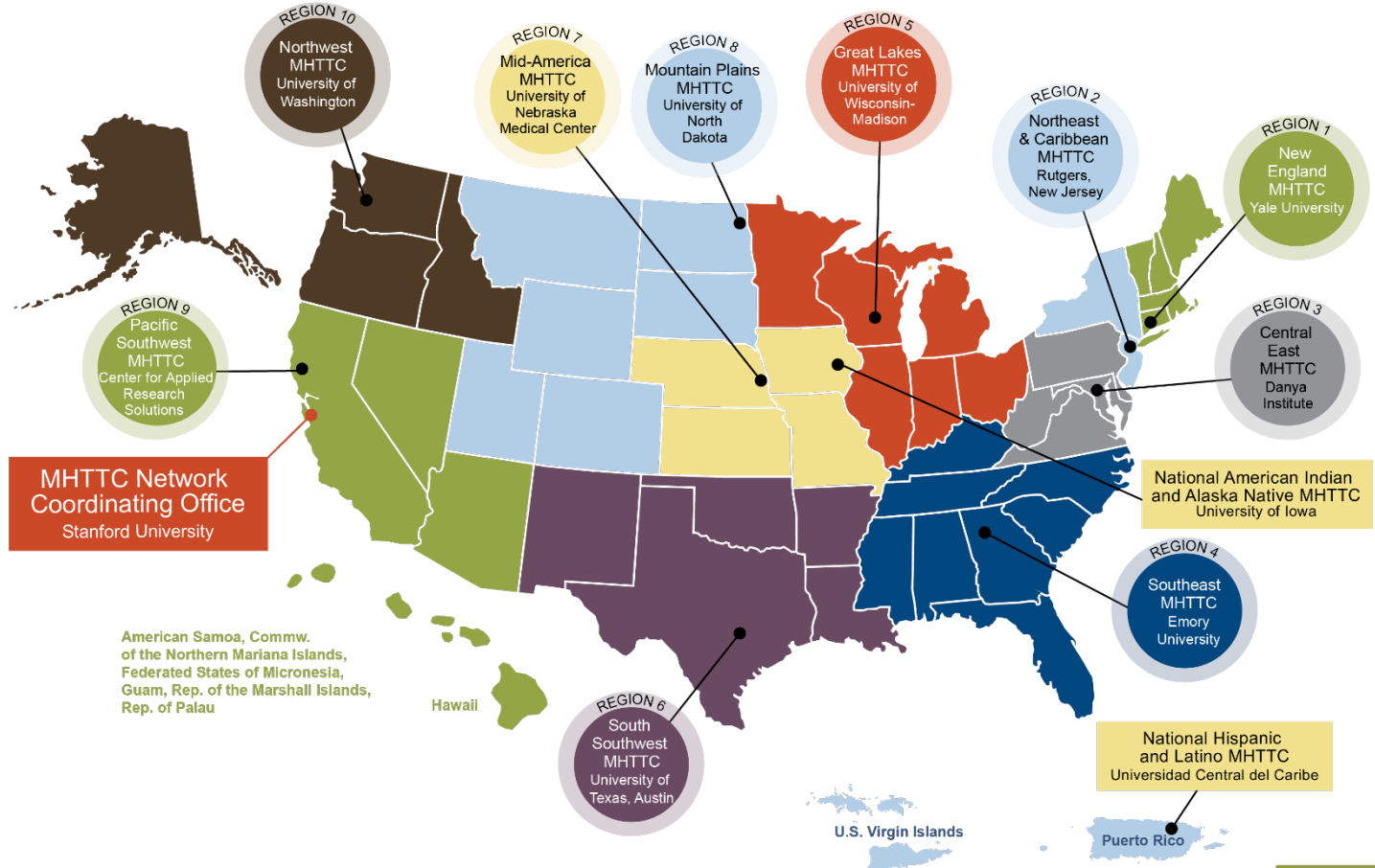SAMHSA
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MHTTC Network

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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Central East MHTTC Goals

Funded by SAMHSA to:

- Accelerate the adoption and implementation of mental health related evidence-based practices

- Heighten the awareness, knowledge, and skills of the behavioral health workforce

- Foster alliances among culturally diverse practitioners, researchers, policy makers, family members, and consumers

- Ensure the availability and delivery of publicly available, free of charge, training and technical assistance

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Central East Region

HHS REGION 3

Delaware

District of Columbia

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Grant Support

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Agenda

- What We Know About Digital Peer Support

- Technology Distribution to Service Users

- Peer Support Specialists and Service User Training
  — Hiring
  — Training
  — Supervision

- Sustainability Considerations

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What is Digital Peer Support

- **Digital peer support:** Live or automated peer support services delivered through technology media.

  – Peer-to-peer networks (i.e., informal groups like Facebook groups)

  – Peer-delivered programs supported with technology (i.e., trained peer support specialists that use smartphone apps or videoconferences to offer peer support)

  – Telephone or videos (i.e., synchronous technology and asynchronous technology)

Fortuna, KL, et al. (2020). Digital Peer Support Mental Health Interventions for People With a Lived Experience of a Serious Mental Illness: Systematic Review. *JMIR: Mental Health, 7* (3), e16460

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What We Know About Digital Peer Support

- No geographical or time limitations;

- Can support fidelity-adherent delivery of peer-supported evidence-based practices;

- Promising evidence of effectiveness;

- Engages service users in digital mental health outside of clinical environments;

- Expands the reach of peer support services;

- Increases the impact of peer support without additional in-person sessions; and

- Potentially, can access hard-to-reach groups—rural residents, home-bound adults, etc.

Fortuna, KL, et al. (2020). Digital Peer Support Mental Health Interventions for People With a Lived Experience of a Serious Mental Illness: Systematic Review. *JMIR: Mental Health, 7* (3), e16460

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Is Digital Peer Support Effective?

Digital peer support studies have established support for the feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary effectiveness with regard to….

Mental Health Challenges

- Enhancing hope, quality of life, empowerment, social support, and recovery;
- Enhancing functioning;
- Reductions mental health symptoms;
- Engagement in services.

Fortuna, KL, et al. (2020). Digital Peer Support Mental Health Interventions for People With a Lived Experience of a Serious Mental Illness: Systematic Review. *JMIR: Mental Health, 7* (3), e16460

Is Digital Peer Support Effective?

Digital peer support studies have established support for the feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary effectiveness with regard to….

Substance Use Challenges

- Reductions in risky substance use;
- High levels of satisfaction and perceived benefit;
- Engagement in services.

Ashford, RD, et al (2019). Systematic review: Digital recovery support services used to support substance use disorder recovery. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies, 2* (1), 18-32

Technology Distribution to Service Users

1. **Technologies**
   - **Contact your local health authority to advocate for free tools.**
   - **Go to Meeting: Emergency Resources**
   - **Call 211**
   - **Safelink**

2. **Data plans**

   --Companies like Comcast, Sprint, T-Mobile and AT&T are providing additional mobile hotspot data, and offering Lifeline partners more data.

   Helpful Tip:
   Request multiple phones so can you have them on hand

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How Can Peers Help People Experiencing Homelessness?

- Phone trees to educate the community and connect the community
- Free WiFi hotspots throughout the country
- Know your local resources
  - 211 for data plans and phones
  - Street kiosks to charge phones

How Can Peers Connect with People who are Deaf or Have Hearing Loss?

- Include captions on videoconferencing
- Useful apps for people who are Deaf or have hearing loss
  - Google Live Transcribe
  - AVA
  - Rogervoice
  - Voxsci
  - TapSOS
  - Braci Sound Alert
  - Signly
  - GnoSys

How Can Peers Connect with Translation Services?

- Translation services can be used with refugees or others who do not speak your verbal or written language
    - Google Translate on smartphones and video conferencing services
    - Language Line Solution
        - Provides on-demand language interpretation in over 240 languages.

Helpful Tips:

- Need Internet connection with unlimited data—uses a lot of data

How Can You Evaluate Your Organizational Readiness for Using Digital Peer Support?

- ✓ Training
- ✓ Learning
- ✓ Infrastructure
- ✓ Hiring Procedures
- ✓ Supervision Procedures

Fortuna, et al. (in press). Perceptions and Knowledge of Peer Support Specialists Regarding Barriers to and Facilitators of mHealth Engagement Among People with Serious Mental Illness. *Journal of Technology and Behavioral Science.*

Digital Peer Support Organizational Readiness: Training

- Training for peer support specialists and service users:

  — [Short courses accessible on-demand](#) designed for peer support specialists and service users

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Digital Peer Support Organizational Readiness: Training

- Training for peer support specialists and service users:

  - **Formal technology training**
    - How to use videoconferencing software
      - Scheduling meetings
      - Running meetings
      - Privacy in videoconferencing platforms
      - Videoconferencing etiquette
      - Accessing technology websites (e.g., address firewalls)

Fortuna, et al. (in press). Perceptions and Knowledge of Peer Support Specialists Regarding Barriers to and Facilitators of mHealth Engagement Among People with Serious Mental Illness. *Journal of Technology and Behavioral Science*.

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Art and Science of Helping Adults Learn

- Need to know why they need to learn
- Need to learn experientially
- Approach learning as problem solving
- Learn best when the topic is of immediate value
- Teacher relinquishes authority and becomes a facilitator (Knowles, 1978)
- Bring a package of experiences and values – each unique
- Come to education with intention
- Bring expectations about the learning process
- Have competing interests – the realities of their lives
- Have their own set patterns of learning (Brookfield, 1986)
- Learner's past experiences used in process (Rogers, 2001)

Digital Peer Support Organizational Readiness: Infrastructure

- Provide peer support specialists with smartphones, laptops and/or tablets with remote access to provide peer support services;

- Offer smartphones to service users (i.e., Safelink & Lifeline Services);

- Offer hotspots for rural areas, homes in basements (i.e., Lifeline assistance program);

- Consider technology preference (i.e., tablet, smartphone);

- Work with information technology department to ensure access to websites and apps;

- Create transparent plan to monitor technology for safety; and

- Access to a technology help desk.

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Separating Your Work and Your Personal Life

- Even though people are not in the same place physically, digital peer support is not immune to boundary crossings and violations.
  - May lead to more frequent and more casual interactions and behaviors.

How to Separate Your Work and Your Personal Life

✓ Ensure Timely and Consistent Feedback and Manage Excessive Communications

Helpful Tips:
- Use *67 to block caller ID
- Googlevoice to block your personal number
- Professional social media page

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How to Separate Your Work and Your Personal Life (cont.d)

✓ Model Appropriate Self-Boundaries

✓ Maintain Your Normal Hours and Normal Location

Helpful Tips:
- Leave your normal business hours on your voicemail and/or away message

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Digital Peer Support Hiring Procedures

- **Interpersonal traits**
  - Being mindful of their own interpersonal difficulties and boundaries; and
  - Engages in self-care activities (Almedia, et al.)
  - Openness

- **Inclusion of peer support specialists on hiring team**

- **Important hiring questions**
  - "What are you doing for their own recovery?"

Almeida, et al. (under review). Co-Design of the Mental Health & Substance Misuse System with Peer Recovery Support Specialists.

Supervising Peer Support Specialists using Technology

- Expansion of billable peer support, resulted in peer support worker supervisors with no direct knowledge of Peer Support values
  - Non-peer support specialists' ethical codes often deter essential aspects of peer support such as self-disclosure.
  - Promotes practices inconsistent with values (e.g., medication management).

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Supervising Peer Support Specialists using Technology

- Continued growth of the peer support specialists workforce and increased attention of the value of peers by industry and academia.

- With technology, service users and peer support specialists must be <u>informed</u> and <u>understand</u> monitoring of technology and use of data produced by technology;

- Safety plans need to be in place in the event that distress and/or suicidality is present.

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Contact Information

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http://digitalpeersupport.org/

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Evaluation

[Evaluation Link](#)

Once you complete the evaluation, you will be directed to the resource page and certificate request form.

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Appreciation

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MHTTC Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
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