



What exactly does a peer specialist do on a clinical team?

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Peer Support:

Love freely given

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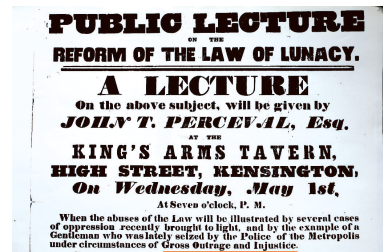
John Thomas Perceval (1803-1876)

I reflected how many were in the same predicament as myself...and I said, who shall speak for them if I do not - who shall plead for them if I remain silent? How can I betray them and myself too by subscribing to the subtle villainy, cruelty, and tyranny of the doctors (of the asylum)?



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The Alleged Lunatics Friends Society
1845-1863



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Self-help for medical conditions

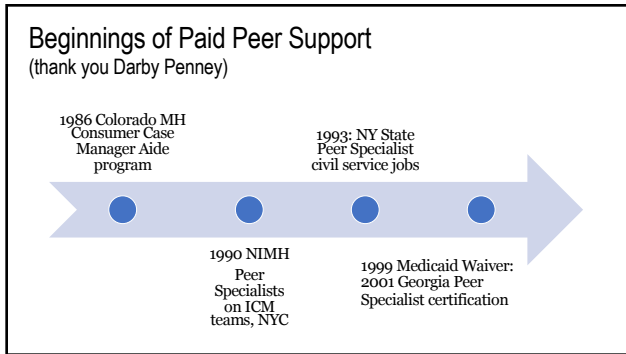
- ✓ Cancer support
- ✓ MS
- ✓ Parkinson's



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Peer Specialists

- ✓ Do not use clinical language
 - Decompensate
 - Baseline
 - Lacks insight
- ✓ Do not assess
- ✓ Do not encourage/discourage compliance
- ✓ Do not attribute motive to peers
 - Attention seeking
 - Sabotaging the job

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Drift

When peer specialists think, speak and act like clinicians, the team loses out on their unique contribution

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The unique contribution of peer specialists on clinical teams is to help deepen the clinical case study into a story of the struggling and resilient human being that has come for help. PS help teams understand how this individual makes sense of their experiences.

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Role Responsibilities for Peer Supporters Working in Traditional MH Programs

- Relationship building
- Influencing team culture
- Embracing creative narratives
- Having a voice and choice in finding the treatment that is right for me

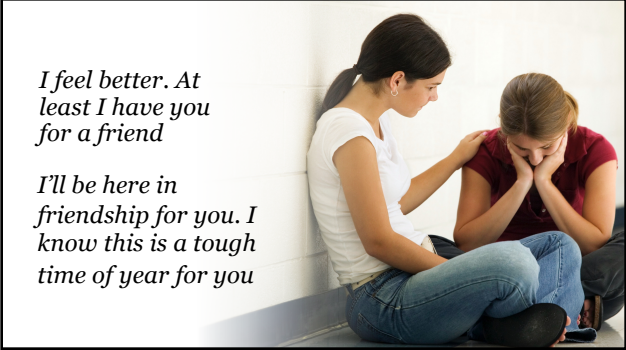
Shout out to Sascha Altman DuBrul and Abaigeal Duke with whom I collaborated on these ideas

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Role Responsibility #1: Relationship Building

Peer Specialists develop relationships with program participants that include connecting around their shared mental health experiences and other aspects of their lives. These relationships should be reciprocal in nature where both the peer specialist and the participant are encouraged to make contributions.

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I feel better. At least I have you for a friend

I'll be here in friendship for you. I know this is a tough time of year for you

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Why not friends?

- Friends don't get paid to be with friends
- Friends don't write Medicaid billable notes with friends or about friends
- Peer specialists' relationship with peers is a "bridge" that arcs to the real world of friendship and community

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Role Responsibility #2: Influencing Team Culture

Peer Specialists positively influence the team culture by emphasizing the perspectives and experiences of participants, highlighting a holistic view of each individual and making space for their viewpoint. Peer Specialists, alongside other team members, encourage the use of recovery-oriented language among team members.

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Influencing Team Culture: Language

Objectifying language	Person first language
Schizophrenia, bipolar, borderline	Person whose been diagnosed with...
Low functioning	I haven't discovered Jim's gifts yet...
Decompensating	Having a hard time and skipping work
Non-compliant	She's not feeling motivated to take meds
Frequent flyer	Feels safer in the hospital...
Manipulative	Desperate. Good at getting what he needs
Unmotivated	Seems to want to play video games rather than go to school these days
Return to baseline	She says she feels like herself again

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Influencing team culture: Flyers in waiting area

The image shows three flyers. The first is for DBSA (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance) with contact information for various support groups. The second is for the Hearing Voices Network USA, featuring a map and the slogan 'Hearing Back Our Power'. The third is titled 'The Management's Crazy Conspiracy for Hearing Voices' and discusses the impact of medication on hearing voices.

DBSA:
Depression Bipolar Support Alliance

Hearing Voices Network

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Influencing team culture:
Humanizing and complicating the story

Validating our peer's dignity

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Influencing team culture:
Humanizing and complicating the story

Validating our peer's dignity

Rights

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P = psychiatric
A = advance
D = directive

Get the free app in Google Play or Apple App Store

The advertisement for 'My Mental Health Crisis Plan' (MHCP) features the app's logo, a 5.0 star rating, and a 'View in Mac App Store' button. The interface on the right shows a 'My PAD' menu with six items: Personal Information, Statement of Intent, Choosing a Decisionmaker, Desires for Care, Statement of my Preferences, and Terminating this PAD.

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Role Responsibility #3:
Embracing creative, complex narratives

Peer Specialists explore and discuss multiple frameworks for understanding life experiences including personal understandings of what clinicians call mental illness. The Peer Specialist is encouraged to embrace participants' diverse narratives in order to create space for complex personal stories of recovery and resilience.


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A peer specialist was in a clinical team meeting where a new program participant was being discussed. He said,
I think Zach is pretty low functioning and I should begin outreaching to his sister who can supervise his med compliance.

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A more complex narrative

Some of the voices Zach hears are really wonderful. They comfort him and help him believe he's really special. He doesn't take the meds because they interfere with those voices. He doesn't want to get rid of them.



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Keanu told his peer supporter: *Stories about shamans go way back in my culture. Maybe my visions and voices mean I'm becoming a shaman. Maybe I don't have psychosis.*

The peer supporter replied: *Man, your Doc says you have psychosis. It's not your fault. In order to recover, you have to accept your illness. That's the first step.*



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Peer Supporters

- Support peers in making personal meaning of their experiences
- Embrace complex narratives
 - Trauma
 - Spiritual emergence
 - Variations of human experience
- These alternative stories of self deepen the clinical narrative

*Special thanks to Sascha DuBrui for helping me appreciate this dimension of peer support



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Role Responsibility #4: Advocacy & Empowerment

Peer specialists support people in having a voice and a choice in all aspects of mental health care, including decisions about medications.


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Peer Specialists and Psych Meds

The role of peer supporters is to help people prepare to participate in having a voice and choice in all decisions about psychiatric meds. Peer supporters assist individuals in becoming empowered self advocates when it comes to meds and other treatment approaches. We are not doctors, that is true. But we have the lived experience of working with doctors and we understand the importance of speaking up and being a self advocate during appointments.

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Marisol

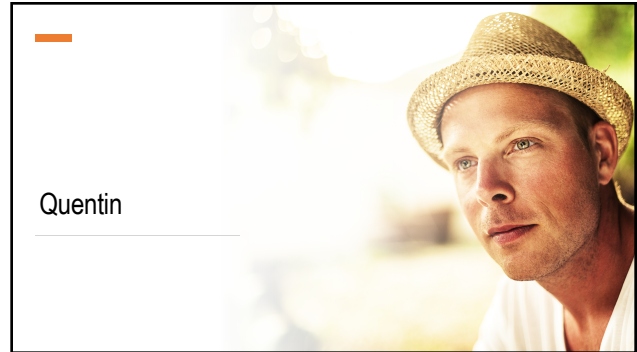


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Analysis

- ✓ Marisol had a strong and healing relationship with the program participant
- ✓ Marisol began to drift from the peer specialist role into a clinical role, when she began trying to persuade the participant to be compliant with meds in order to get the housing
- ✓ Peer specialists don't persuade or "get" people to do things including collaborate w/ families or clinicians in involuntary medication measures
- ✓ Peer specialists support participants in having a voice and a choice in decisions about meds
 - ✓ Review requirements for housing eligibility with participant
 - ✓ Do a decisional balance worksheet to weigh pros and cons
 - ✓ Support informed decision making and options
 - ✓ Help participant prepare questions or concerns about meds for nurse

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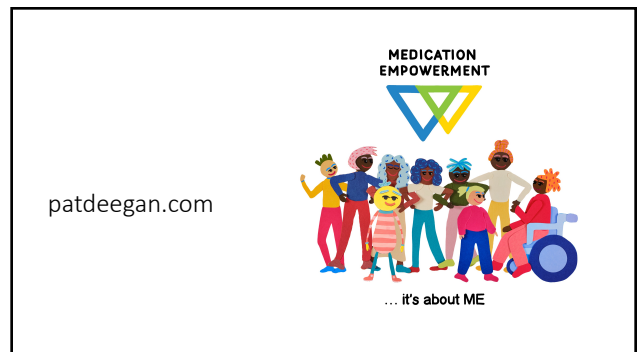


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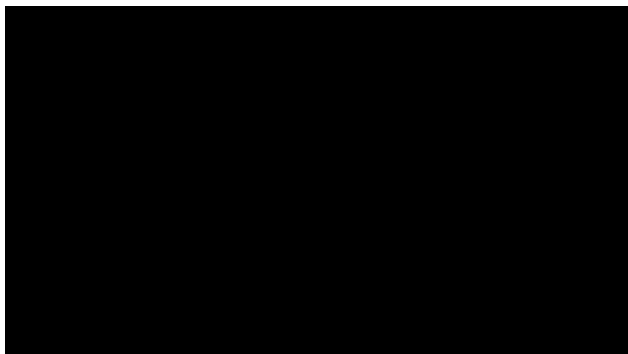
Analysis

- ✓ Quentin has drifted away from the peer supporter role, into activism
- ✓ Peer supporters do not practice activism during paid work hours.
- ✓ Advocacy is a central role of peer supporters
- ✓ The role of peer specialists is to support people in advocating for deprescribing, med reduction, med discontinuation, etc.

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Power Statement	My Power Statement Plan
I want to work together to find a medicine that will: <i>Make the voices quiet down</i>	I will share my Power Statement with: <i>My doctor</i>
so that I can: <i>pay attention to making the pizzas at work</i>	My next steps: <i>I'll take a pic of this and have it on my phone. Then I'll have it to show my doctor at my next appointment</i>

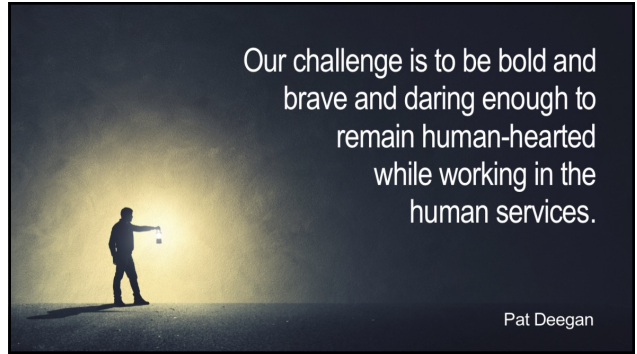
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Peer specialists on clinical teams:

- ✓ Deepen the clinical formulation
- ✓ Represent the individual's understanding of what is happening
- ✓ Influence team culture to be more recovery oriented and person-centered
- ✓ Advocate and support self-empowerment so the individual's voice and choice is understood by the team
- ✓ Pull back the lens to include legal, rights, community and cultural perspectives

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Our challenge is to be bold and brave and daring enough to remain human-hearted while working in the human services.

Pat Deegan

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Join our conspiracy of hope



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CommonGround Software

Recovery Academy

Hearing Distressing Voices Simulation

Certified Personal Medicine Coaching

Personal Medicine Guides

Medication Empowerment

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