

Building Trust in the Workplace with Hierarchical Transparency

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Chapter 1.

Trust and Transparency

1. PEER SUPPORT UTILIZATION OF TRUST AND BUILDING RAPPORT

2. HISTORY OF TRUST IN PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

3. PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS AND SUPERVISORS IN A WORKPLACE SETTING

Section 1.

Peer Support Utilization of Trust and Building Rapport

Peers utilize transparency every time they meet with the people they serve

The mutuality and empathy shown in peer support allows for rapport and trust to develop between both Peer and the people they serve. This allows the ability to share more openly knowing a level of understanding between both. Peers will continue to be allowed to provide trauma-informed and person centered services.

By sharing information of a similar experience with the person receiving services, it breaks down misconceptions of BH Services and its providers.

Peer Support Specialists are trained to know what to share and how. PSS will not add experiences that would further traumatize or take the focus from the client.

Peer Support Specialists understand the importance of trust in their recovery journey. Trust with services, the people providing those services and the support system that they develop.

2. History of Trust in Peer Support Services

- IN ORDER TO ENGAGE WITH THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE, PSS WILL FIRST FOCUS ON RAPPORT BUILDING BY ACTIVELY LISTENING WHICH ALLOWS THE PERSON TO FEEL HEARD. PSS ALSO FOCUSES ON OPEN COMMUNICATION WHICH AT THIS POINT INFORMS THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE OF EXPECTATIONS AND BOUNDARIES. ULTIMATELY TOGETHER DEVELOPING A PLAN TOGETHER FOR RECOVERY THAT IS DESIGNED BY THAT PERSON FOR THAT PERSON.
 - PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS UTILIZE TRUST DAILY IN THEIR SERVICES TO ASSIST THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE IN ACHIEVING THEIR GOALS IN THEIR RECOVERY PROCESS. PSS SHARE LIVED EXPERIENCE, WORK WITH NOT FOR THE PERSON AND EMPOWER THE PERSON TO LEAD THEIR OWN RECOVERY JOURNEY.
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- SUPERVISORS UTILIZING TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY ALLOWS THE PSS A SENSE OF SECURITY WHICH DECREASES WORK STRESS AND NEGATIVE FEELINGS ABOUT THEIR WORKPLACE. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE IS A LIMIT TO THE TRANSPARENCY IN COMMUNICATION AS A SUPERVISOR.

Section 3.

Peer Support Specialists and Supervisors in a workplace setting

PSS stigma in the workplace from the PSS POV

- Feelings of failure from the start
- Pressure to overachieve/overcompensation which might lead to burnout
- Self Doubt/Imposter Syndrome
- Thoughts/Feelings of “The other shoe dropping” “They (supervisors) wouldn’t understand” “They (supervisors) wouldn’t know”
- Shame/insecurities to share challenges to Supervisor.
- A lack of recognition of vulnerability as a strength.

Supervisor Stigma in the workplace from Supervisors POV

- Misunderstanding/Being unclear of PSS Services and Core Competencies
- Risks in utilization of PSS
 - Relapse
 - PSS being unclear of how to work in a clinical setting
 - PSS inability to understand hierarchal standards
 - Supervisor wearing their “therapist goggles”

Chapter 2.

What does Transparency with a Peer look like?

SECTION 1.

EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION

SECTION 2.

AVOIDING WORKPLACE HIERARCHIES

Section 1. Effectiveness of Communication

Increase in communication will include many practices which include:

- Frequent meetings with staff (ex. Staff meetings and one and one supervision) which will give staff a platform to share concerns and give feedback.
- Exercising these meetings with transparency means empowering staff to share honestly (in a professional manner), validating their concerns/questions and allowing problem solving as a team.
- One on one/supervisions will allow for open feedback from both staff to discuss challenges, participation from PSS in goal setting, expectations and discussions on current productivity.

Section 2. Avoiding workplace Hierarchies

Understandably we are unable to completely erase a hierarchal work platform—we have different responsibilities and are placed in supervisor positions to assist, protect and serve our PSS. So how do we develop a feeling of trust and transparency in the workplace without dismantling the hierarchy?

- Open door policy
- Giving credit to our staff—projects completed and goals achieved during staff meetings
- Open communication, active listening and validation
- Giving information such as assisting staff in locating union representatives contact info and directing staff on how to retrieve information about the organization.


Chapter 3.

The Future of PSS in Behavioral Health Services

Section 1. Taking the Peers lead when Hierarchy makes itself known

Section 2. How Certification assists in this process

Section 3. Continuing Transparency in the workplace



Section 1. Taking the Peers lead when Hierarchy makes itself known

What happens when PSS empowers others on the team to utilize transparency in the workplace?

- Utilizing open ended questions during staff meetings can invite more viable discussion on team environment. Feedback will become more expected and welcomed. This will also develop problem solving skills as a team and highlight staff strengths in the office.
- Empowering other staff to self advocate. When a peer role models patience and kindness at work it is done in a professional way –which other staff can possibly be struggling in doing. Role Modeling and building a path to this ability for others in the team will assist with decreasing stress levels at work. PSS will be utilizing techniques to develop self advocacy through gentle curiosity and kind assertion.
- Education/Communication of everyone's duties and responsibilities. Peer Support Services is not new, however it is also not as common to see in every behavioral health clinic/service program. In allowing PSS to inform of their duties and responsibilities it will empower other staff to do the same. This will clear the waters on responsibilities, expectations and ability to utilize each others services. A level of understanding will also allow others to highlight strengths and achievements which will then develop a more positive environment in the workplace.

Section 2. How Certification assists in this process

It Becomes a Mirror

Certification will deconstruct bias and preconceptions on both sides.

PSS have been the new kid in class for many years, seen as paraprofessionals and GIVEN a position, not earned a position. PSS have been preconceived as uneducated and needed to be watched closely. Certification will legitimize Peer Support Services and highlight the role Peer Support Specialists have played in the advancement in Behavioral Health Services.

PSS will also have an understanding of the continued education a clinical staff has to accomplish and complete to continue working in Behavioral Health. The role and responsibilities of clinical staff will now be highlighted to PSS staff.

This level of understanding will create better partnership between PSS and Clinical staff which then will develop a learning opportunity to identify the unique role of each .

Section 3. Continuing Hierarchical Transparency in the workplace

So, we did it....what next?

As PSS continue to be utilized—not only to provide services to consumers but also to unite and develop a more positive workplace, they gain confidence to move forward in their career.

Upward Trajectory of career goals will introduce a new generation of supervisory staff, a more united and fulfilled staff.

Hierarchical Transparency in the workplace will increase productivity, develop a nurturing/positive workspace and higher standards of care.

Thank You.

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