

# “What Do You Think?”



## Peer Support Agencies Survey Results **Report to the Executive Directors**

New Hampshire Bureau of Behavioral Health  
105 Pleasant Street  
Concord, NH 03301

State Planning Office

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Table of Contents

**INTRODUCTION**..... 3

**SURVEY RESULTS**..... 4-13

    Question 1.....4

    Question 2.....5

    Question 3.....6

    Question 4.....7

    Question 5.....8

    Question 6.....9

    Question 7.....10

    Question 8.....11

    Question 9.....12-13

**DISCUSSION**..... 14-17

**CONCLUSIONS**.....17

**APPENDIX**.....19-28

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## INTRODUCTION

In May of 2008, the Executive Directors of the Peer Support Agencies (PSAs) met with the NH Bureau of Behavioral Health State Planner. The purpose was to find out if the PSAs were interested in an online survey that would provide input for the NH mental health block grant State Plan. The PSAs are funded by NH's grant (64%), and by State general funds (36%).

The 2009 online survey was developed during a series of meetings. The goal of the survey was to receive feedback from members of Peer Support Agencies that will contribute to mental health planning and system transformation. The survey addressed nine questions, with an array of answer choices, and permitted comments to be added to each section of the survey.

**Throughout May, June, and July 2009, 153 people took the survey, which is 38% of the reported 467 PSA participants during that time period.**

Service planning benefits from including the perspectives and recommendations of the people most likely to be involved. Input from members of PSAs is important for shaping the State's planning process for State-funded PSAs and Intentional Peer Support certifications in New Hampshire. The survey results will be included in the State Mental Health Block Grant reports. A shorter version is provided for public dissemination and posted on the BBH website.

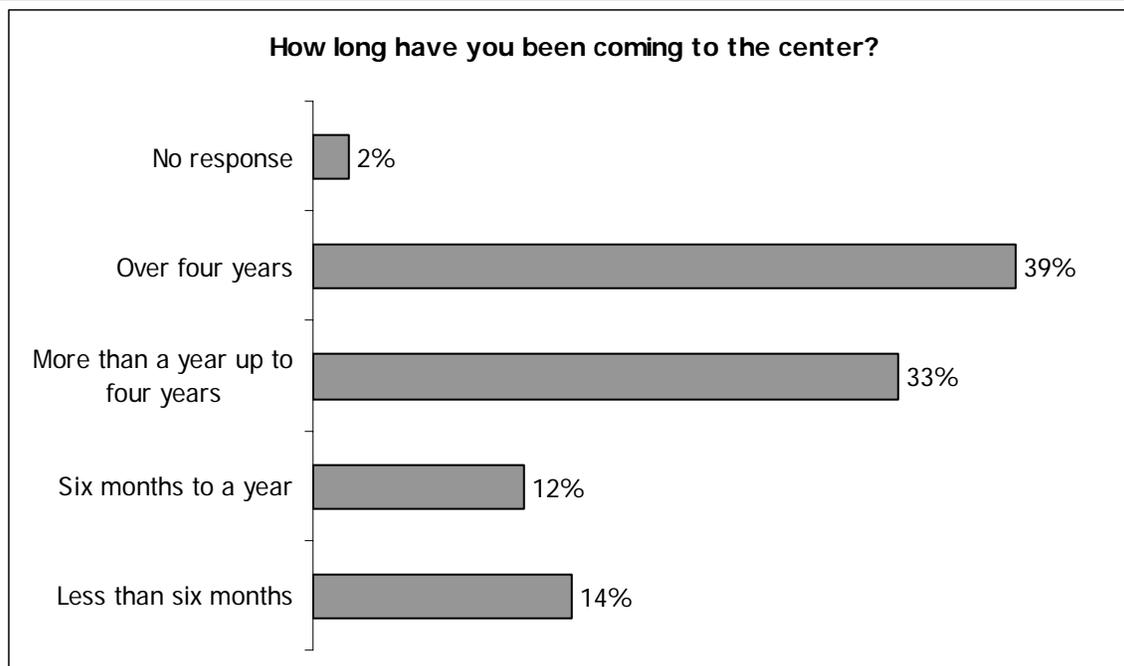
It was decided to use the survey in a new State Performance Measure for New Hampshire's block grant application. The survey relates to the block grant's National Outcome Measure (NOM) #8 - Increased Social Supports/Social Connectedness. It also relates to the President's New Freedom Commission Goal #2: Mental Health Care is Consumer/Family Driven.

The State Planner and the PSA Executive Directors conferred regularly regarding all key aspects of survey development, conducting of the survey, and survey results. The number of surveys completed is targeted to increase by 10% each year, in ratio to the number of participants coming to the PSAs. The response rate from the FY09 survey was intended to establish the baseline for a response rate for future survey-based projects, related to input from people engaging in peer support through the PSAs receiving funding from the MH block grant. Due to issues with census reporting, this will be deferred until the next survey. See Discussion.

The participation in the online survey was voluntary. The survey is a non-scientific sample of people who engage as members in Peer Support Agencies. The PSA staff were asked to encourage participation and assist in the use of the computer to complete the survey, if requested. Other surveys will be designed and implemented in the future, to determine what types of activities might best serve the PSA participants and potential participants, to promote and support individual recovery and full community participation.

## SURVEY RESULTS

### Question 1



Over 25%<sup>1</sup> of those taking the survey have been engaging in Peer Support for less than a year.

Almost 40% of those taking the survey have been coming to the PSAs for over four years. Over 30% have been coming from over one to up to four years.

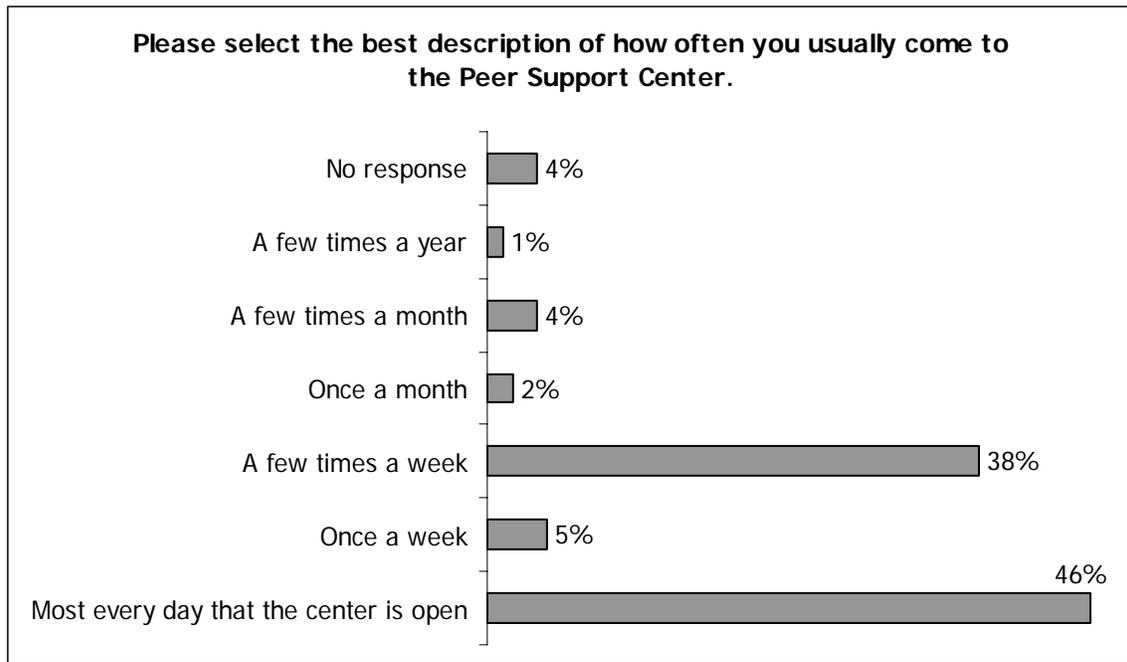
### A Sample of Optional Comments<sup>2</sup>

- *...a safe haven when I need a place to go for support*
- *...the wellness program is always here for support for everyone*
- *...one of the better place's I have seen in all my years of needing good support*
- *...love coming here and visiting with my friends...it takes away my loneliness  
...like to talk to people...it helps with my depression*
- *...warm safe place were I can take risks and develop healthy relationships*
- *...great place to meet people with similar issues*
- *...also help me to keep in touch with life*

<sup>1</sup> All percents are rounded from two decimal places.

<sup>2</sup> Sample comments are abbreviated and/or paraphrased to capture the essence without using full quotes; comments were selected to be representative of the whole, positive and negative; there were very few negative comments.

## Question 2



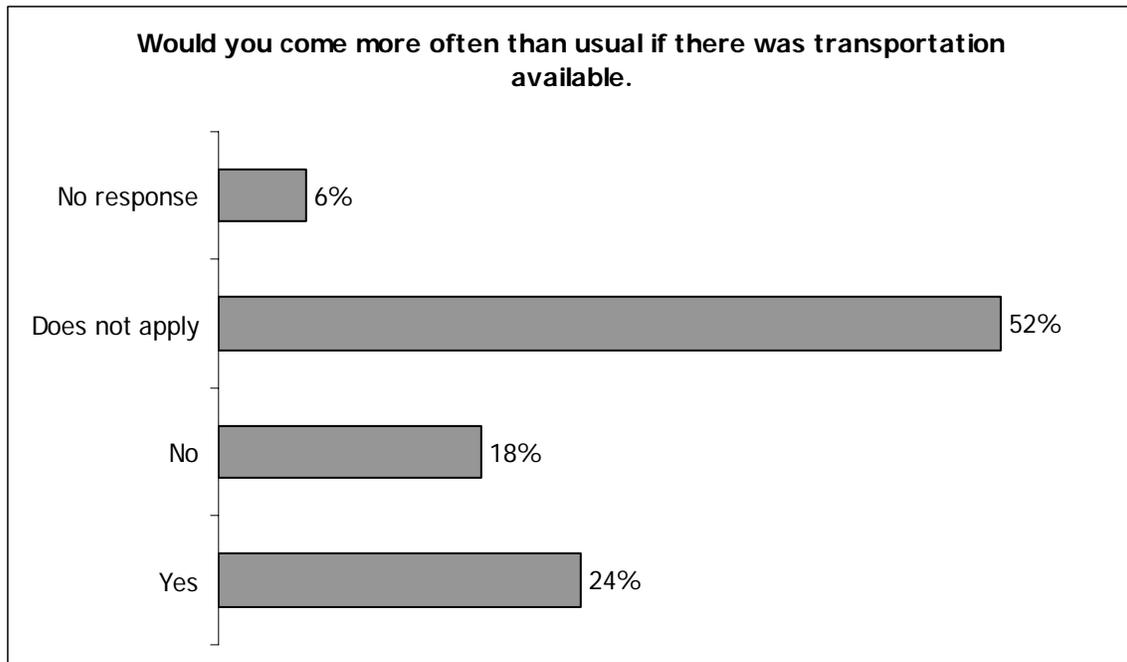
Over 45% of those taking the survey come to the PSA most every day it is open, and 89% of those surveyed come at least weekly.

Seven percent of the respondents report coming once month to a few times a year.

### A Sample of Optional Comments

- *...when I am not working*
- *...often wish Sunday was also an option*
- *...needs to be open over the weekends when you have a hard time*
- *...this is a major part of my life*
- *...I was an original member and now am a member staff person*
- *...I came more often when I became homeless, and I could shower there*
- *...the wellness recovery has a lot to offer in helping me that is not available any where else*
- *...I think your peer support needs **BIG OVERHAUL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!***
- *...exceptional support with a personal touch*
- *...depends on if I am working or just enjoying peer support*

### Question 3



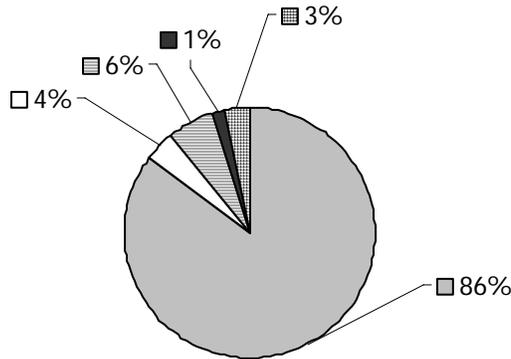
If transportation were more available, 24% of those surveyed would come to the PSA more often. For 70%, it would not make a difference.

#### A Sample of Optional Comments

- *...we need a van*
- *...I have my own transportation*
- *...I get a ride from the PSA van when I want to come in*
- *...I walk*
- *...we have transportation*
- *...most people do not have the access to transportation or monetary support to get here*
- *...it (van?) should be used for center use only, NOT A CAB*
- *...the transportation is perfect in this center*
- *...I have a car*
- *...we have transportation and it's greatly appreciated*
- *...I get a ride and pay for it...it would be better if there was a service*
- *...transportation is essential to the accessibility of the agency*

## Question 4

As a result of your participation in Peer Support have you experienced a better lifestyle, better health, or any other improvements in your general well-being?



Yes, I have experienced better well-being as a result of Peer Support.

No, my participation in Peer Support has not affected my well-being.

I am not sure whether my participation in Peer Support has made any difference in my well-being.

I have felt less overall wellness as a result of participating in Peer Support.

No response

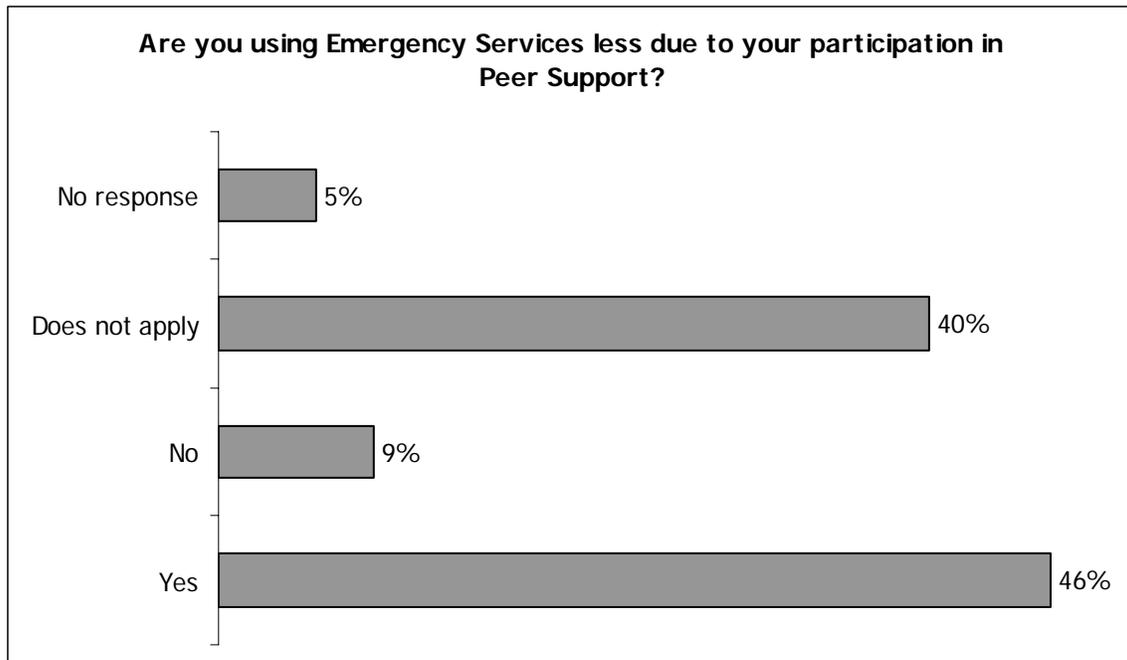
Over 85% of those surveyed report experiencing increased well-being because of utilizing peer support.

Eleven percent are unsure, have not experienced an affect, or have felt a decrease.

### A Sample of Optional Comments

- *...peer support has given me myself back*
- *...I look forward to developing new life skills of WRAP and IPS*
- *...before I had trouble with communication...would yell instead of talk... now I am able to sit and listen with a better understanding (of) different world views*
- *...I see only aggression that comes out in group*
- *...has given me frameworks for shaping and evaluating friendships*
- *...more aware of trying to overcome drinking and am going to AA*
- *...I always learn something about my behavior and my life and I get to practice even if I make mistakes*
- *...peer support has saved me from hospitalization*
- *...has given me people to talk to, a welcoming place to have a cup of coffee and just watch if I want*
- *...I am more into helping myself*
- *...I have been able to deal with life situations better*
- *...I feel more confident and have been volunteering*
- *... now facilitate a group, used to be very reserved*

## Question 5



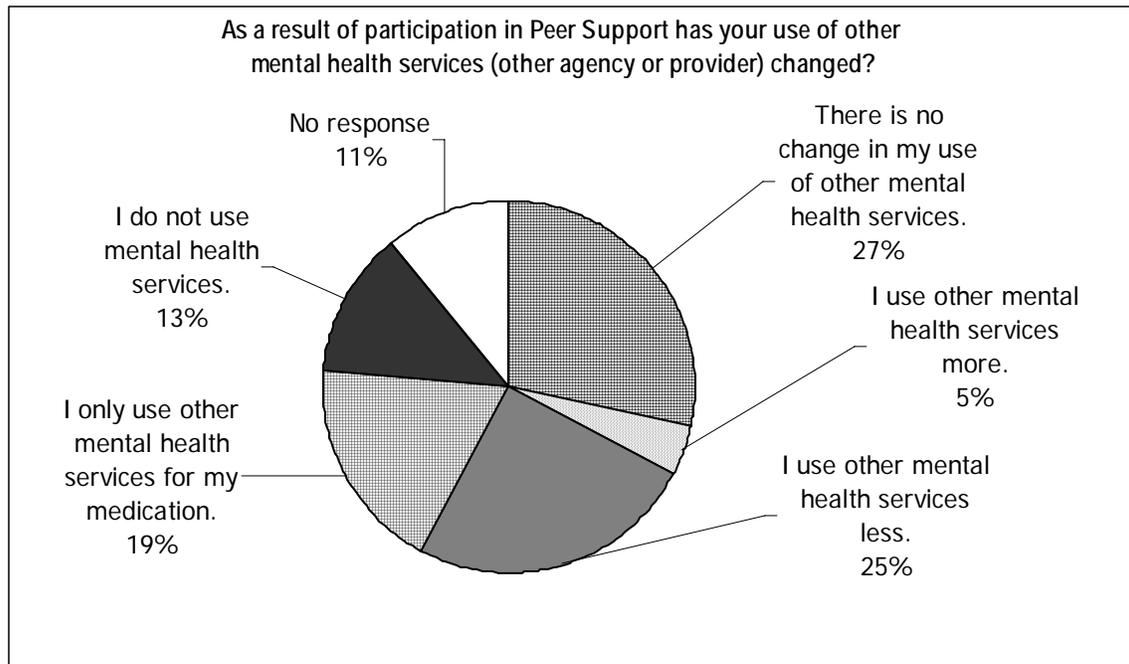
Over 45% of people taking the survey report using public Emergency Services less as a result of their participation in peer support.

Nine percent report no decrease and 40% report the question does not apply.

### A Sample of Optional Comments

- *...haven't needed emergency services since I have peer support*
- *...I have used the warmline instead*
- *...used to use every crisis line I could find but haven't needed that in a long time*
- *...have not been to the hospital since*
- *...have never used Emergency Services*
- *...have learned to deal with my emotions a little better since coming to the PSA*
- *...I have a good safety net at my PSA*
- *...have been out of the hospital for several years*
- *...I have used Peer Support Crisis/Respite*
- *...warmline*
- *...coming to wellness support helps so much*

## Question 6



One quarter of the respondents report a decrease in their use of other mental health services due to their utilization of peer support.

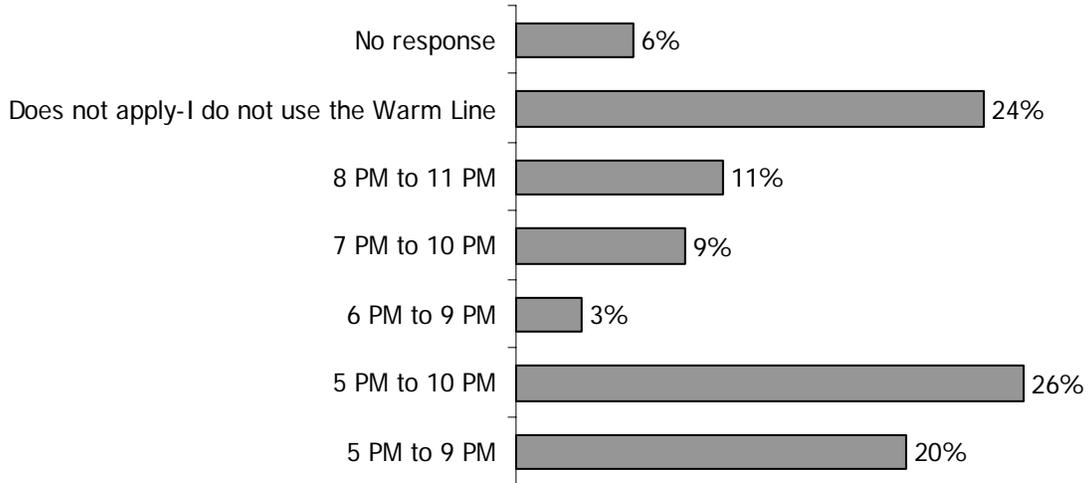
Over 25% report no change in utilization while 5% report an increase. Thirteen percent do not use mental health services and 19% use them for medication management only.

### A Sample of Optional Comments

- *...the PSA has helped me overcome some of my social inadequacies*
- *...tried therapy several years ago, but it did not seem very helpful*
- *...we are relating here in ways that are truly healing*
- *...with peer support I realized that other members have had similar experiences (with mental health services)*
- *...I am not as needful as I used to be*
- *...see my psychiatrist less...can share and adjust more to treatment difficulties*
- *...I have had a terrible experience with mental health services*
- *...I am able to be part of the decision making for my treatment and recovery plan*
- *...because I am learning my skills in order to deal with situations, I am more involved in both at this time*
- *...now I feel no need for therapy*

## Question 7

**All Peer Support Centers have Warm Line hours available seven days a week, but different Centers have different hours. If you could choose, which hours for the Warm Line would work best for you?**



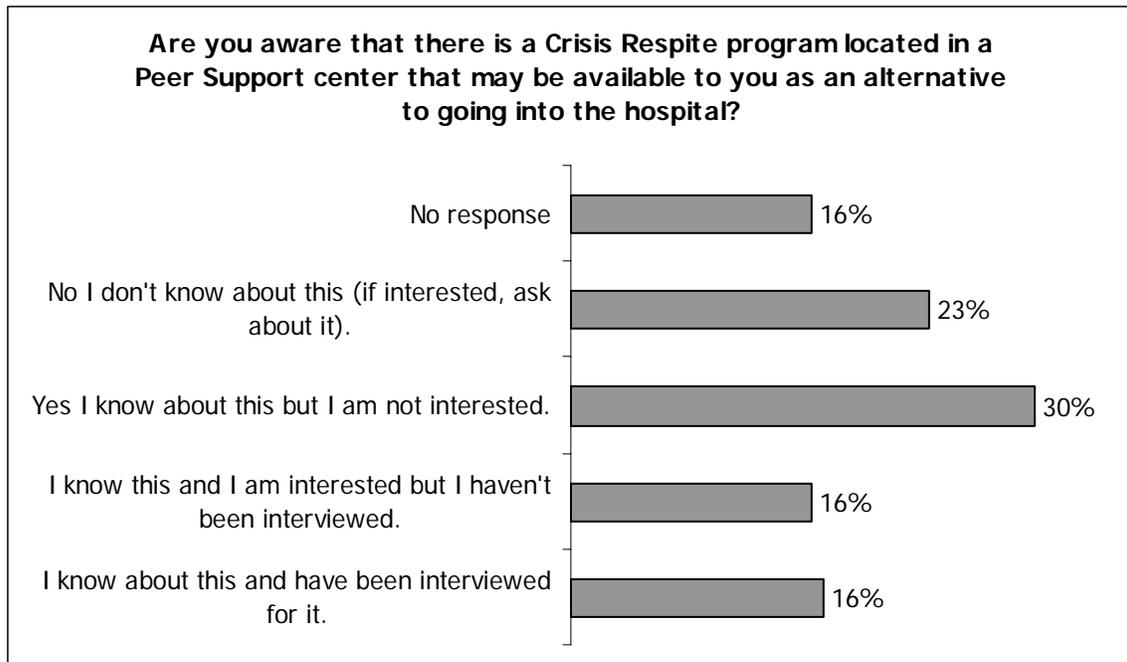
Over 25% of those taking the survey reported that Warm Line hours of 5 PM to 10 PM worked best for them. Thirty-two percent selected other hours that fit within that range, but that started later or ended earlier.

Eleven percent preferred a service extending to 11 PM. One quarter of those surveyed do not use the after-hours telephone service.

### A Sample of Optional Comments

- *when I am anxious, it really helps*
- *...sometimes these are the toughest hours of the evening*
- *...I like more hours*
- *...warm line does not call me anymore*
- *...would use it more if it were opened later*
- *...would like to be able to call sooner if I needed help*
- *...it should be a 24-hour line*
- *...middle of the night hours...wouldn't have to call Emergency Services between 1 am and 4 am*

## Question 8



Thirty percent of the survey respondents reported being aware of, but not being interested in, the Crisis Respite program.

Twenty-three percent of those taking the survey did not know about the program.

Sixteen percent reported awareness and interest, but had not been interviewed for the program.

Sixteen percent of those surveyed have been interviewed for Crisis Respite.

### A Sample of Optional Comments

- *...would like to know more about it*
- *...we don't have anything like that in this area*
- *...even this line of questioning shows your whole system needs over hauling*
- *...where is this Crisis Respite program?*
- *...have observed it is good for others*
- *...have been interviewed many times*
- *...they haven't come to my center yet*

## Question 9

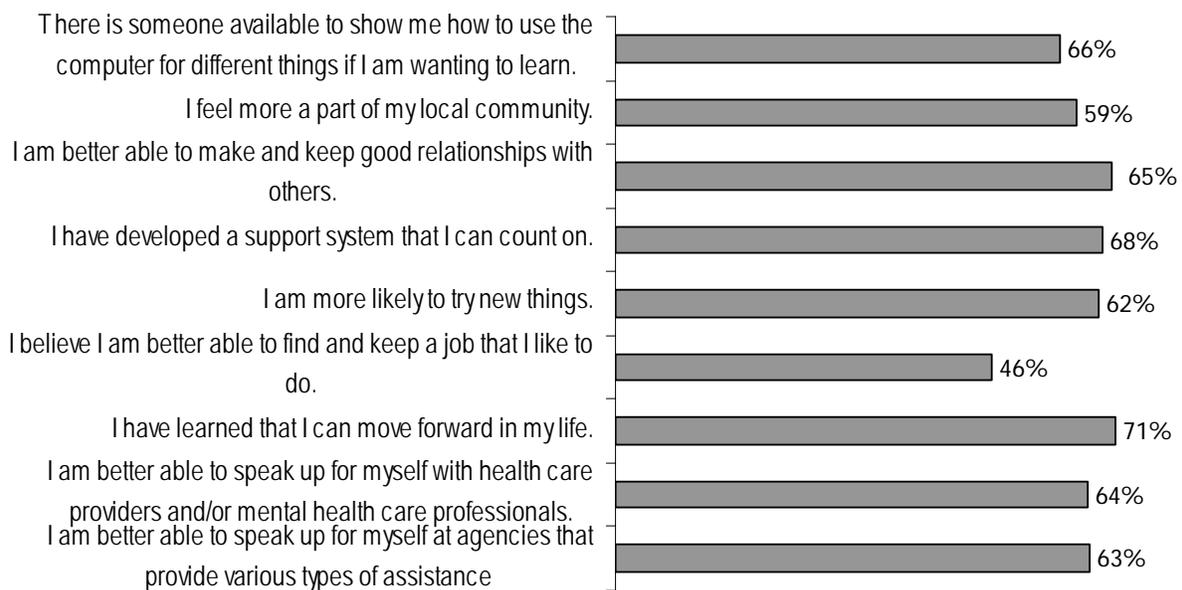
**Please rate how true these statements are for you, as a result of your involvement in Peer Support.**

| <b>Answer Options</b>  | <b>Not true at all</b> | <b>A little true</b> | <b>Fairly true</b> | <b>Very true</b> | <b>No response</b> |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| I am better able to speak up for myself at agencies that provide various types of assistance (like food, housing, benefits, employment, and such.) | 3                      | 15                   | 28                 | 93               | 9                  |
| I am better able to speak up for myself with health care providers and/or mental health care professionals.  | 6                      | 12                   | 25                 | 95               | 10                 |
| I have learned that I can move forward in my life.   | 5                      | 6                    | 26                 | 105              | 6                  |
| I believe I am better able to find and keep a job that I like to do.   | 5                      | 15                   | 27                 | 68               | 33                 |
| I am more likely to try new things.  | 3                      | 13                   | 35                 | 91               | 6                  |
| I have developed a support system that I can count on.   | 4                      | 12                   | 24                 | 100              | 8                  |
| I am better able to make and keep good relationships with others.  | 2                      | 8                    | 36                 | 96               | 6                  |
| I feel more a part of my local community.  | 7                      | 15                   | 30                 | 87               | 9                  |
| There is someone available to show me how to use the computer for different things if I am wanting to learn.                                       | 6                      | 7                    | 15                 | 98               | 22                 |

## Positive Responses to Question 9

**Please rate how true these statements are for you, as a result of your involvement in Peer Support.**

**This chart shows the percent (of 148 people) who selected VERY TRUE**



Of those responding to the survey, 71% reported learning that they may move forward in life, and 68% noted having developed a support system that they may count on.

Sixty-five percent reported being better able to make and keep good relationships.

Survey-takers reported being better able to speak up for themselves with mental health service providers (64%) and with agencies providing assistance (63%) such as food, benefits, housing, employment and other such supports.

An increase in feeling more a part of their local communities, due to utilization of peer support, was reported by 59% of those answering the survey.

Sixty-two percent noted they were more likely to try new things, and 66% reported having available assistance with computer skills, at the PSA, if desired.

Regarding employment, 46% reported believing they are better able to find and keep a job they like to do.

#### A Sample of Optional Comments

- *...we trust each other and depend on each other*
- *...I do not have to pretend to be something I am not*
- *...my people skills have gotten better*
- *...feeling better after being at the PSA is something I can count on no matter what else is going on*
- *...wish I knew people who would share more knowledge with me about using the computer*
- *...the PSA has showed me how to be my own person*
- *...we support each other on difficult days as well as good ones*
- *...I think that the PSA helps people to get sicker*
- *...I have built a support net with my friends since being involved with peer support*
- *...not seeing a health care provider right now, but I feel confident I would be better able to speak up, and in a nicer way, than I ever would have without peer support experiences*

## DISCUSSION

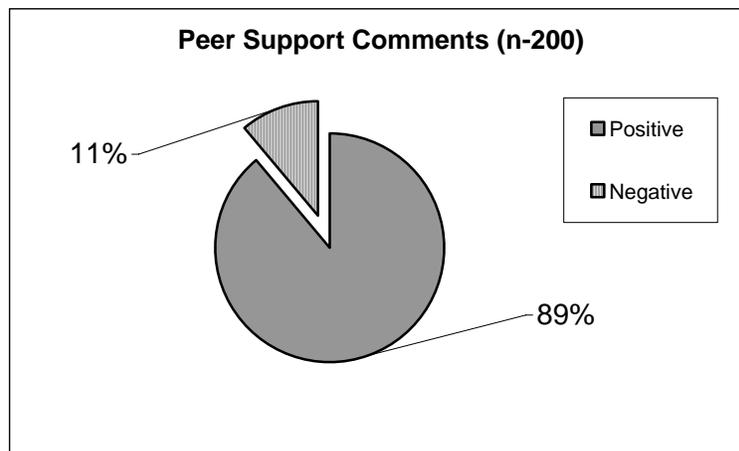
Overwhelmingly, the data generated by the survey results and the optional comments indicated that the majority of those taking the survey had positive experiences with peer support and the Peer Support Agency at which they participated.

Because this is not a scientific survey, minor problems encountered with the data provided by the PSAs for their unduplicated counts during the survey period are viewed as insignificant, and not affecting the overall interpretation. However, because the MH block grant funding awards are increasingly requiring the provision of data to justify the national expenditure, the issue of accurate reporting is becoming more important for all the states.

In the case of the NH PSAs funded by the block grant, efforts are underway to improve the data collection and reporting process. It is probable that the apparent response rate of 38% is inaccurate and the actual rate is much lower. That is not able to be determined at this time and thus a baseline from which to gauge future increases or decreases cannot be set. It is anticipated that the reporting issues will be resolved before the next survey is released, and that a baseline will be able to be established upon completion of that survey.

The survey design encouraged “write-in” comments in each of the nine sections. Over 200 (N=202) comments were made. Two comments that were critical of local mental health agencies were not included in the positive-negative ratio because they were not related to the PSAs. All 202 comments are included, verbatim, in the Appendix.

Of the 200 comments related to peer support, 178 (89%) were positive (89%) and 22 (11%) were negative. Identifying whether a comment belonged in the “positive” or “negative” category was inherently subjective; however there were no comments that appeared too ambiguous to make a reasonable determination. Positive comments were either clearly positive, or somewhat neutral and clearly not meant to be negative or critical, such as “don’t use the computer much”. Negative comments were either clearly negative, or somewhat neutral, which could be viewed as not essentially positive, such as “would like later warmline hours”.



## Philosophy and Value Judgments

**Philosophy:** “The philosophy of modern peer-run support programs is grounded in the earliest writings of mental health consumers/survivors. A (literature review)...shows that no matter how diverse these programs are today, they share common emancipatory and caring functions that define their operating principles.”<sup>3</sup> Emancipatory (empowerment) functions evolved from the civil and disability rights movements and caring functions emerged in response to “...social isolation and the failures of the community mental health system to provide services responsive to consumer needs and preferences.”<sup>4</sup>

While purposely avoiding any discussion of mental health vs. mental illness, brain disorders, labels, and stigma, as well as additional discussion of the history and evolution of peer support programs in America, a few core elements must be addressed in the context of New Hampshire’s network of state-funded PSAs and their primary approach to providing peer support.

First, what is mental health peer support?

A simplified description is “Peer support is very generally described as supports and services provided by individuals who have experienced serious mental illness to others who also have mental illness. Peer support will soon be recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as an evidence-based practice in the delivery of mental health services.”<sup>5</sup>

Second, what is “recovery”?

A simplified description is “Individuals must define for themselves what recovery means to them. For some it may mean achieving personal goals to live a fulfilling and productive life and for others it may mean effectively managing the effects of their illness. For an individual to engage in the recovery process, it is important that she or he possess hope that recovery is possible, have choices regarding community-based services and supports, have access to resources that allow for basic needs to be met such as food, clothing and housing and have a strong community network. Such a network can include but is not limited to friends, family and faith-based organizations.”<sup>6</sup> In NH, this network includes Peer Support Agencies.

Third, what is the philosophy informing New Hampshire’s PSAs?

In New Hampshire, “Peer support consists of supportive interactions based on shared experience among people and are intended to assist people to understand their potential to achieve their personal goals. Interactions are based on trust, respect, and mutual support. Peer support agencies accomplish this by providing choice, using non-medical approaches to help, sharing decision making, encouraging informed decision making about all aspects of people's lives, and

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<sup>3</sup> On Our Own, Together: Peer Programs for People with Mental Illness, edited by Sally Clay, Vanderbilt University Press, Nashville, 2005, pp 33-34

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. pg.34

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.sppg.com/peer\\_support/pdfs/peer\\_support\\_one\\_pager.pdf](http://www.sppg.com/peer_support/pdfs/peer_support_one_pager.pdf) Iowa Peer Support Training Academy

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/position-statements/11> Mental Health America

challenging perceived self-limitations. Services include, but are not limited to: face-to-face and telephone peer support; outreach; monthly educational events; activities that promote self-advocacy; wellness training; after hours warm line; crisis respite (24 hours, short-term, non-medical crisis program).”<sup>7</sup>

Fourth, what is Intentional Peer Support (IPS), the model being implemented in NH’s PSAs?

A simplified description is “IPS is a philosophy based on four tasks used to develop and maintain relationships. Through relationships we think about help in a new way. Rather than focusing on problem solving and what we don't want in our lives, we instead challenge one another to discover our hopes and dreams. Together we learn and grow and move towards what we want. The Four Tasks of Intentional Peer Support are: Building Connection; Helping each other understand how we've come to know what we know (worldview); Re-defining help as a co-earning and growing process (mutuality); Moving towards what we want, rather than away from what we don't want.”<sup>8</sup>

**Value judgments:** The survey results provoke questions for discussion which are highly susceptible to individual and socio-cultural value judgments. Example: if the survey reports that a high percentage of persons have been participating in PSAs for over four years, a reader might be of the opinion that there is a problematic lack of personal development and a degree of unhealthy dependency upon these agencies and the peer support process.

Alternatively, a reader might interpret the results as indicating that people have attained such a significant source of stable support for their ongoing well-being that the duration of involvement is an imperative. Further, are the people who are engaged for over four years the same individuals who are participating weekly, or just a few times a year? What impact does frequency of participation have, if any?

“...Despite the fact that “peer support” appears to be sweeping the country, the unique ways in which persons with histories of mental illness and recovery can be useful in facilitating the engagement and recovery of others are just beginning to be explored and developed. This should ...be taken...as a cautionary note about making claims that go beyond existing data.”<sup>9</sup>

Drawing useful information from some of the survey questions is difficult. Without additional data, and regardless of the reader’s interpretation, the meaning of certain results is simply unknowable. However, the questions raised from the answers will enable the PSAs and the Bureau of Behavioral Health to have material from which to start a dialogue. Such discussion should lend itself to the utilization of a variety of methods and approaches to better understand how to best enhance the operations and effectiveness of the PSAs throughout the state.

### **Some questions raised by the survey responses:**

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/BBH/peer-support-agencies.htm> NH Bureau of Behavioral Health

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.maine.gov/DHHS/mh/wellness/intentional\\_peer.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/DHHS/mh/wellness/intentional_peer.shtml) Maine Adult Mental Health Services

<sup>9</sup> Peer Support Among Adults With Serious Mental Illness: A Report From the Field, Larry Davidson, Matthew Chinman, David Sells, and Michael Rowe, Schizophrenia Bulletin vol. 32 no. 3 pp. 443–450, 2006 <http://schizophreniabulletin.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/32/3/443>

- Is there an average duration of involvement with a PSA that is associated with full participation in the community?
- Does involvement with a PSA in excess of four years generally indicate a lack of full community participation?
- Does long-term involvement imply a dependence on the PSA that may have the affect of discouraging full community participation?
- Does long-term involvement with a PSA indicate that people are using the PSA as a stable and consistent support system, which is instrumental in helping the individual maintain his or her recovery and reduce or eliminate psychiatric hospitalizations?
- Does the frequency of involvement at a PSA significantly influence personal recovery?
- How is participation defined at a PSA, to distinguish active involvement from mere attendance, such as at a “drop-in center”?
- What percent of PSA attendees are actively engaged in participating in peer support as articulated in the State’s Administrative Rules<sup>10</sup> governing such agencies?
- The belief that one’s ability to find and keep a job that one likes to do was the lowest “positive” response from Question 9. Over 50% indicated not believing that they experienced personal improvement in this area. Is there a dynamic within PSAs that seems to inhibit, or not support, a move towards satisfactory employment?

## CONCLUSIONS

What might we be able to say about the individuals taking the survey and the PSAs with which they are involved?

The primary finding is that peer support participants who took the New Hampshire survey indisputably view themselves as benefiting from their involvement in peer support, in ways that they attribute to their peer support experiences.

“While hospitalizations, functioning, and symptoms are important barometers of improvement, they do not constitute all of what is involved in recovery. Measures oriented to the recovery domains identified by people living with mental illness are (just) now being developed.”<sup>11</sup>

A blog on Hub Pages by “Girlfriend”, addressing Peer Support makes note of the following:

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<sup>10</sup> Primarily He-M 402: Peer Support

<sup>11</sup> Peer Support Among Adults With Serious Mental Illness: A Report From the Field, Larry Davidson, Matthew Chinman, David Sells, and Michael Rowe, Schizophrenia Bulletin vol. 32 no. 3 pp. 443–450, 2006

“Recovery and its success through the Peer Support Model is based on 5 different pathways of ones life:

CHOICE  
HOPE  
EMPOWERMENT  
ENVIROMENT and  
SPIRITUALITY”<sup>12</sup>

The 200 comments analyzed for this consumer feedback project appear to readily fit within most of these “pathways”. Choice, hope, empowerment, and environment are easy to discern in the writings; comments relating to spirituality were not discernable, beyond one noting that peer support was a "God send.”.

The secondary finding is that the comments contributed by the NH survey participants led to the identification of six core themes, clearly of importance to the wellness and recovery of these individuals, singly and as a group.

**Safety:** This theme included comments related to any aspect of personal or communal safety, physical or emotional, which appeared to be attributed to the peer support setting and experience.

**Support:** This theme incorporated comments that explicitly or indirectly referenced the personal support and assistance received, given, perceived, felt, or shared as a result of PSA involvement.

**Relationships:** This theme included comments describing social, business, warm line (telephone) and service provider interactions and communication, and descriptions of positive changes in relating with others.

**Life Skills:** This theme involved comments about instrumental items such as assistance with computers, goals such as getting a license to drive, and comments about issues such as developing coping strategies, handling stress or teaching others something.

**Health:** This theme included issues such as reduction or elimination of hospitalizations, clinical services, and Emergency Services, as well as use of Crisis Respite, better health care, emotional self-care, healing, using wellness recovery and so forth.

**Self Regard:** This theme incorporated the majority of comments that did not clearly fit into the other themes, and reflected the respondents’ beliefs about their strengths, assets, confidence, talents, self-advocacy, and recovery.

One comment that perhaps sums up the expressed common experience is this one:

“I know that at the XYZ Peer Support Agency it is all about being all I can be and want to be. I appreciate that.”

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<sup>12</sup> PEER SUPPORT and what it has to do with mental illness. <http://hubpages.com/search/peer+support>

**Report: Peer Support Agencies July 2009 Survey**  
**NH Bureau of Behavioral Health**  
**State Planning Office, October 2009**

**APPENDIX: ALL COMMENTS**

## ALL COMMENTS VERBATIM

These optional comments are in addition to the answers for the “parent” question and may or may not actually relate to the question. PSA identification<sup>13</sup> within individual comments has been removed to preserve the anonymity of those taking the survey. There were 202 comments entered in total. Two comments did not relate to the PSAs.

### Question 1 (22 comments)

#### **How long have you been coming to the center?**

- To me this place is a safe haven for me when I need a place to go for support. this is one of the better place's I have seen in a long time of all my years of need a good support line.
- Very helpful!
- I find it very informative to what is going on. They also help me to keep in touch with life.
- a warm safe place were I can take risks and develop healthy relationships. I love my center and can not wait to have our own place.
- i really like this place and i am glad that we have a place to help us out
- valuable asset to this community
- I really appreciate the help with wellness recovery to help me cope, I know I can't do it alone
- Great place! VERY helpfull. EXCELLENT and knowledgeable staff!! Please keep up the great work.
- Looked for a group after another group i was involved with closed. This facility has been a God send for me.
- i love coming here and visiting with my friends.
- i like coming here
- Actually have been amembr, in pretty good standing for ten years
- well i was a Volunteer for awhile than became employed
- It has been a great place to learn new ideas about having relationships, approaches that have helped, and friendships that have lasted.
- i love to come to the (PSA) where i can be with others and not be hame all day
- Really helpful always to know there is support it means alot to know that the wellness program is here whenever always for support for everyone
- Great place, EXCELLENT staff as well as excellent resources
- Great place for peer support and to meet people with similar issues.
- I love coming to the center because it takes away my loneliness. I like to talk to people. It helps with my depression and It helps me make friends.
- i have found the center a place of great help to my life
- just opened

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<sup>13</sup> An error in the survey generator process eliminated the possibility of identifying which comments came from which PSAs, as well as which came from other e-mail clients, such as home, work, or library computers.

## Optional Comments Continued

- Since it began

## Question 2 (18 comments)

**Please select the best description of how often you usually come to the Peer Support Center.**

- The center needs to be open over the weekends when you have a hard time.
- I think your peer support needs BIG OVERHAUL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- I come on Sundays and enjoy reading and discussing WRAP and Peer Support. I also get time to read the classified listings of job available and share the info with other members.
- I became a original member and started volunteering and now am a member staff person.
- am there 7 days a week
- i really like this place
- Exceptional support with a personal touch
- the wellness recovery has a lot to offer in helping me that is not available any where else
- I didn't come as often when I was working full time. I came more often when I became homeless, and I could shower there...
- varies
- It often depends on if I am working or just enjoying peer support,
- i go to the center when i have to work or i just wanna see who is there
- I would come more, but I work.
- I really appreciate the help I receive from everyone don't know what I would do without everyone's support and then I can help with words to others
- I get a lot of Peer Support coming here.
- This is a major part of my life. I often wish Sunday was also an option to pick for a day to go to my PSC when I am having a hard day on that day.
- I come when I am not working
- Most every day for a couple of hours

## Question 3 (29 comments)

**Would you come more often than usual if there was transportation available?**

- The transportation is perfect in this center.
- We do have transportation, and i can't come more than
- there is transportation
- THE TAXIE IS NOT NEEDED it should be used for CENTERS USE ONLY ,NOT A CAB
- when I first started coming to the center, I relied on the provided transportation. Since Winter of 2008 I have had my own vehicle.

## Optional Comments Continued

- I have always had my own vehicle and maintained a NH drivers license.
- We need a van
- i walk here everyday
- i like the van driver
- Transportation is essential to the accessibility of the agency as most people do not the access to transportation or monetary support to get here
- I will/would come regardless
- there is transportation available
- We have transportation
- We have transportation
- transportation is an asset to my availability
- transportation is a some
- I have transportation.
- I have a car and often walk.
- I live close to one.
- we have transportation and it's greatly appreciated
- I do get a ride and pay so if there was a service it would be better.
- i am comfortable with how often I come now.
- I get a ride from the center van when I want to come in
- I come in as much as I want to come in. I just tell the van driver to come pick me up when I want to come into the center
- I like my routine as it is. If I want to come in and need a ride I tell the van driver
- I come into the center as much as I want to, I just let the van driver know when I want to come in.
- I come in as much as I want
- I have my own transportation
- I walk

## Question 4 (45 comments)

**As a result of your participation in Peer Support have you experienced a better lifestyle, better health, or any other improvements in your general well-being? If you choose, please describe this in the Comments box.**

- I am working on the skills necessary to enhance my mental well being.
- My disorder is on its way to recovery thanks to this center.
- I look forward to coming here for the on going help.
- I have to be ready for those changes and even though peer support is beneficial in some ways it's up to me to make the final changes and i just have not.
- I SEE ONLY AGGRESSION THAT COMES OUT IN GROUP
- I live close enough to walk to Peer Support most every day.
- As my first response, I find it very helpful with my lifestyle.

## Optional Comments Continued

- Finding lasting relationships without obligations attached has really helped me. Also it's very comforting to be with people who understand life issues without judgement. Families feel too much stress if they always have to be the ones helping. So Peer Support releases me from additional stress when I begin to feel that I am a burden to my family.
- Since I have been coming it has helped me talk to more people and not feel so much isolation.
- The socialization I have here is healthy for me and gives me activity in my life.
- I look forward to seeing my new found friends and developing new life skills of WRAP AND NOW IPS to practice everyday in my own life and to understanding and sharing with others.
- Generall, my health is improving, except when things, people, get too gamey (head-games) here.
- Some of the other clients are overtaxing as is the center's program manager who works here
- they help me out
- The various experiences and support that is in this community is an asset to keeping people from accessing the more extreme options that exist
- Peer Support I know it as wellness recovery helps me tremendously in my well being as a person I could not get this help otherwise
- I've had "ups and downs" over the almost nine years I've participated.
- Peer support has given me myself back
- (PSA) gives me something to do and meet people[isolation] and i communicate better
- It is most helpful to be around supportive peers who offer no judgment of stigma.
- the groups are very helpful
- I feel better mentally and more funtional at home,less lonley and isolated
- i get alot of help here
- Mostly, because I always learn something about my behavior and my life, and because I get to practice even if I make backward mistakes
- befor i had trouble with comunication and i would yell insted of talk and now im able to sit and liston with a better understanding and know that we all have a diffrent world view
- peer support has been life-changing for the better.
- Peer support center has given me people to talk to, a welcoming place to have a cup of coffee and just watch if I want. It has significantly helped me in ways a mentioned previously; it has given me frameworks for shaping and evaluating friendships!

## Optional Comments Continued

- the people at this wellnes program is very helpful the support I get from everyone here is crucial to my recovery I need their support everyday and if I can help someone because I feel better because I can come here
- I have become a better person. I can relate to others better.
- I am a new commer, so I really can't say. I have attended enough groups to say honestly that participation in Peer Support hahelped a fair/ a lot of people.
- I learned it is OK to ask questions if I don't understand someone's behavior.
- i seem to talk more with other and try to be more friendly.
- I feel better about life and living in general, since I have been coming to the center.
- I met lots of friends and my girlfriend. The groups are helpful. It has improved my life a great deal.
- I am more aware of trying to overcome drinking and am going to AA. I am more into helping myself.
- It has been a good influence for me.
- I have more friends.
- I feel more confident and have been volunteering a long time, plus I meet a lot of people. I used to be very reserved. I now facilitate a group.
- When I talk with people at the center I feel better, even though I have a therapist to talk to. It helps more to talk with people at the center. I like being in a routine and it doesnt cost me any money to come to the center unlike my therapist who charges me.
- I am working, going to school and having extra help with my studies and socializing and interacting with others while attending school and work
- It has saved me from hospitalization.
- ihave not acted on my neg .thoughts.
- by having the social interaction and activities i have been able to deal with life situations better
- I have worked on myself for several years; DBT & General Relaxation
- Friends (here) help me out and talk, plus do activities there

## Question 5 (13 comments)

### Are you using Emergency Services less due to your participation in Peer Support?

- NO BUT THINK ABOUT IT IF THINGS DON'NT CHANGE
- I hardly use it
- I have not been to the Hospital since.
- I'm not a client of an agency with "Emergency Services", though I have used Peer Support Crisis/Respite on at least one occassion.
- I haven't needed emergency services since I have Peer Support
- Have not used any emergency services

## Optional Comments Continued

- I used to use every crisis line I could find; I haven't needed that in a long time. After the stress of a divorce and loss of income, home, and friends, I could have fallen into a need for services, but I had a good safety net at my peer support center.
- coming to wellnes support help so much
- I am not connected with any.
- I have been out of the hospital for three years
- I have used the warmline instead and have learned to deal with my emotions a little better since coming to the center
- I have never used Emergency services
- Warmline

## Question 6 (13 comments)

**As a result of participation in Peer Support has your use of other mental health services (other agency or provider) changed?**

- Mental Health here I been on the Waiting list here for at least going on two years.
- I have had a terrible experience with mental health services...it almost cost me my life and this was before peer support. After peer support i realized that other members have had similar experiences.
- THE HOLE STSTEM NEEDS OVERHOULING
- Does not apply because in the hospital
- But when I am meeting with my providers I am able to be apart of the dicesion making for my teatment and recovery plan.
- speaking and learning with the help of peer support makes me feel safe I feel like a good person I can trust everyone to help me make decisions
- I had been using just peer support, until Vocational Rehabilitation payed for me to see private therapists trained in EMDR, but I continued peer support
- I see my pschiatrist less,i can share and adjust more to my treament difficulties by knowing i;m not alone and not unique
- Actually (the centers) are my most used source of support.
- I tried therapy at CMHC several years ago, but it didn't seem very helpful and I focused more on my activities at the center. Now I feel no need for therapy. I have persisted at using friends, people I've met there, and now that is really working for me. I have found some open minds and some that think like me, and we are relating in ways that are truely healing.
- My therapist is there for me when I need him but I am not as needful as I used to be.
- because i am learning my skills in order to deal with situations I am more involved in both at this time

## Optional Comments Continued

- I have been ill for over thirty years and (the center) has helped me overcome some of my social inabilities

## Question 7 (23 comments)

**All Peer Support Centers have Warm Line hours available seven days a week, but different Centers have different hours. If you could choose, which hours for the Warm Line would work best for you?**

- After a long day if I am having a hard time with something it would be helpful if the warm line was open more hours.
- I do not really use the warm line but if I had to...or when I'm down those are the hours I would mainly need to talk to someone.
- My peers have suggested middle of the night hours for the warmline. Then they wouldn't call Emergency Services between 1am and 4 am.
- Sometimes these are the toughest hours of the evening.
- It should be a 24-hour line because anything can happen at any time.
- That is a good idea about having that
- The checked time is when most people need the additional assistance.
- I have other peers' phone numbers, which I use in lieu of the warm line.
- I like to call when I am anxious, it really helps
- Consult help from warm line
- After 9 my husband gets irritated
- I like more hours because sometimes I want to call in as soon as I get off work and sometimes more late at night, during the evening when I can feel lonely and at loose ends.
- I would like to be able to call sooner if I needed help.
- I don't need to use the warm line I am most comfortable with the support I receive at the wellness support center here I can share with everyone which is what I need for my recovery people here I can depend on
- I like to talk with other members it helps me out at times.
- I am flexible about.
- Late at night is when it is hard to hook up with other people. If it was later I would use it more.
- I would use it more if it were opened later.
- If it were opened later that would help me, if I needed it. I stay up late and live alone.
- If it were opened later I would use it more.
- I go to bed early so I would like it on early
- Warm line does not call me anymore
- These are good hours

## Optional Comments Continued

### Question 8 (20 comments)

**Are you aware that there is a Crisis Respite program located in a Peer Support center that may be available to you as an alternative to going into the hospital?**

- I was interveiwed at (another center)--they haven't come to my center yet
- We really don't have anything like that in this area.
- I'm aware but it does not apply to me
- EVEN WITH THIS LINE OF QUESTIONING SHOWS YOUR HOLE SYSTEM NEEDS OVER HULING
- Having my own home, yard, and pets, and the only one with the keys to my house makes me feel safe at home even if I was not well. (and a phone)
- I would like to know more about it
- Yes. I hope someday we will have one locally.
- I have used Crisis Respite on at least one occasion.
- My peer support work with me when needed
- yes, I have been interviewed many times
- I don't find the community where the crisis respite program is located, welcoming.
- I have thought I might like to try it when I've run out of good ways to deal with what I'm facing, but I never have. I still sort of enjoy isolating, and now I also have friends to call or see if I need.
- currently not using it but interested.
- i have never been in crisis respite. not sens i been come here.
- I have observed it is good for others, however and it seems to help them get through their problems.
- I don't need it now but am interested just in case I need it.
- I want to learn more about it.
- Where is this Crisis Respite program? Is it in Portsmouth?
- I went to one in Rochester in the past, it helped me get your disability papers completed and I now have SSDI
- I would like to learn more information about it

### Question 9 (19 comments)

**Please rate how true these statements are for you, as a result of your involvement in Peer Support.**

- this is a good place to be to learn stuff and have friends
- Peer support came into my life when I needed something to help me out and I really appreciate it.
- i want to get my license and ged
- I am able to choose the help offered me to feel safe and I feel it is most benefit for my well being
- See the comments I e-mailed to Lee U separately

## Optional Comments Continued

- i would be lost without this place
- i love to be around people
- I don't need help with computers and I have always been assertive. I have to say that my people skills have gotten better and I have built a support net with my friends since being invlved with peer support.
- help with a safe house for people who have no where togo
- i have been usen computers since second grade so i dont need help learning to use them but enjoy teaching others how they work
- I'm not seeing a health care provider right now, but I feel confident I would be better able to speak up now, and in a nicer way, than I ever would have without peer support experiences. (Regarding computer, I really wish I knew people who would share more knowledge with me.)
- i think that the (PSA) help people to get more sick.
- We are involved in supporting each other on difficult days as well as good ones we trust each other and depend on each other
- Once again, I am real new to the center. I am just moving back (after) having been gone for almost seven years.
- ever thing i anser is true.
- I already know how touse the computer.
- I don't use the computer very much.
- The center has showed me how to be my own person and that I am okay just the way I am. I don't have to pretend to be something I'm not.
- I like coming to the (PSA) and talking with all the staff amd members, it always makes me feel better. It is something I can count on no matter what else is going on. I know that at the (PSA) it is all about being all I can be and want to be. I appreciate that
- coming to the peer center has taught me alot of things I never was told and in turn helped to make my life better

...The End...