

“What Do You Think?”



Peer Support Survey Report to the Members The “Readers Digest” Version

November 2009

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INTRODUCTION

The NH Bureau of Behavioral Health conducted the Peer Support survey online. The survey was voluntary and anonymous. The results¹ will be helpful in planning future Peer Support activities.

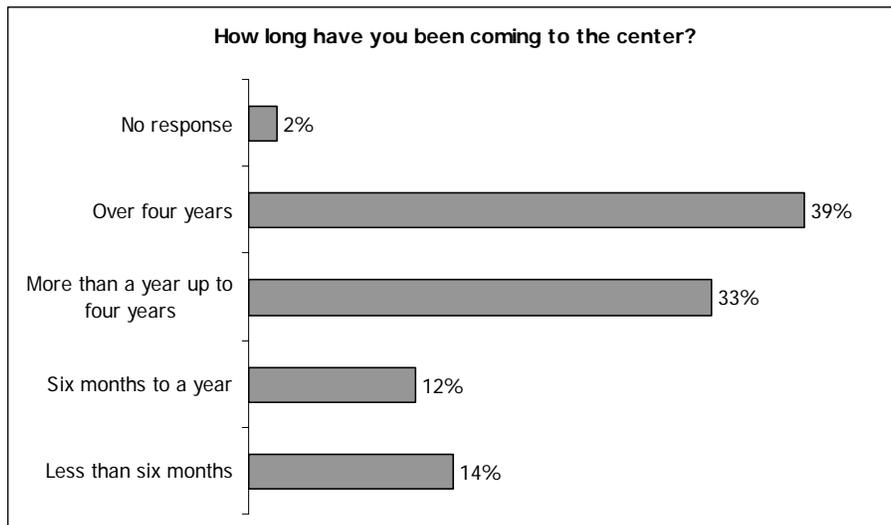
Peer Support Agencies included:

Alternative Life Center
Circle of Life
Cornerbridge
Granite State Monarchs
H.E.A.R.T.S.
On the Road to Recovery
Seacoast Consumer Alliance
Stepping Stone
Tri-City Co-Op

153 people took the survey, out of 467 people coming to the PSAs during May, June, and July of 2009.

SURVEY RESULTS

Question 1



¹ If you prefer the longer version, which is more “research-based”, please ask for a copy of the Report to the Executive Directors or contact Lee Ustinich at the Bureau.

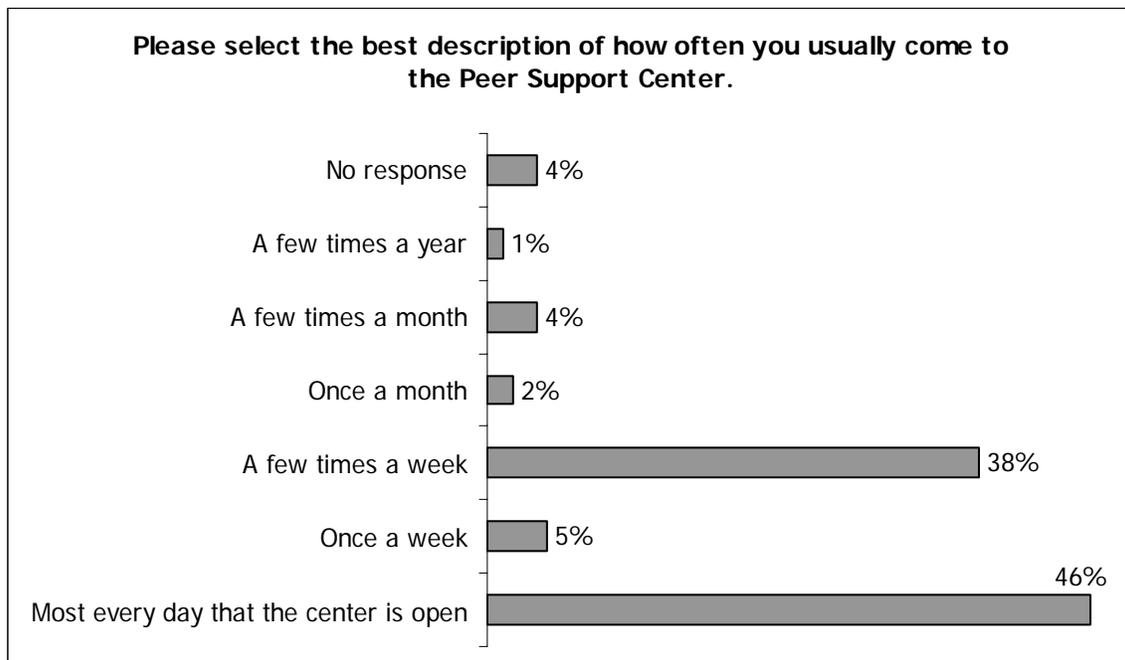
Over 25% of those taking the survey have been engaging in Peer Support for less than a year.

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 Comments²

- *...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*

Question 2



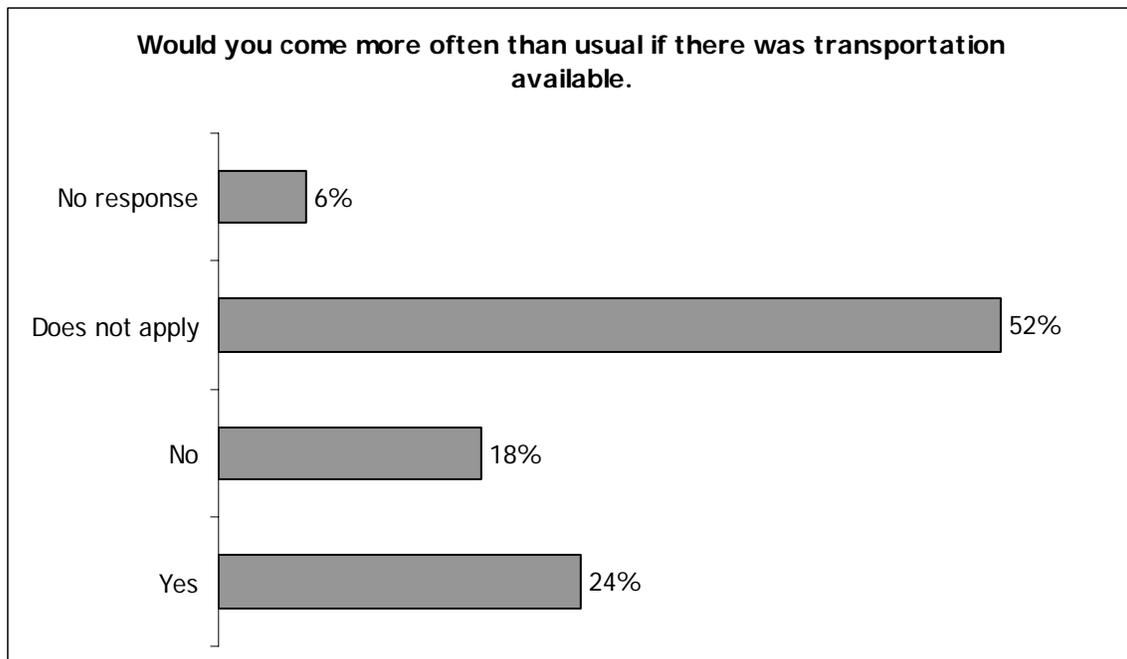
Over 45% of those taking the survey come to the PSA most every day it is open, and 89% of those surveyed come at least weekly.

- *...when I am not working*

² The sample comments are shortened and were chosen as examples of positive and negative remarks; there were very few negative comments. See the Appendix for all comments, exactly as they are worded.

- ...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 anywhere 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

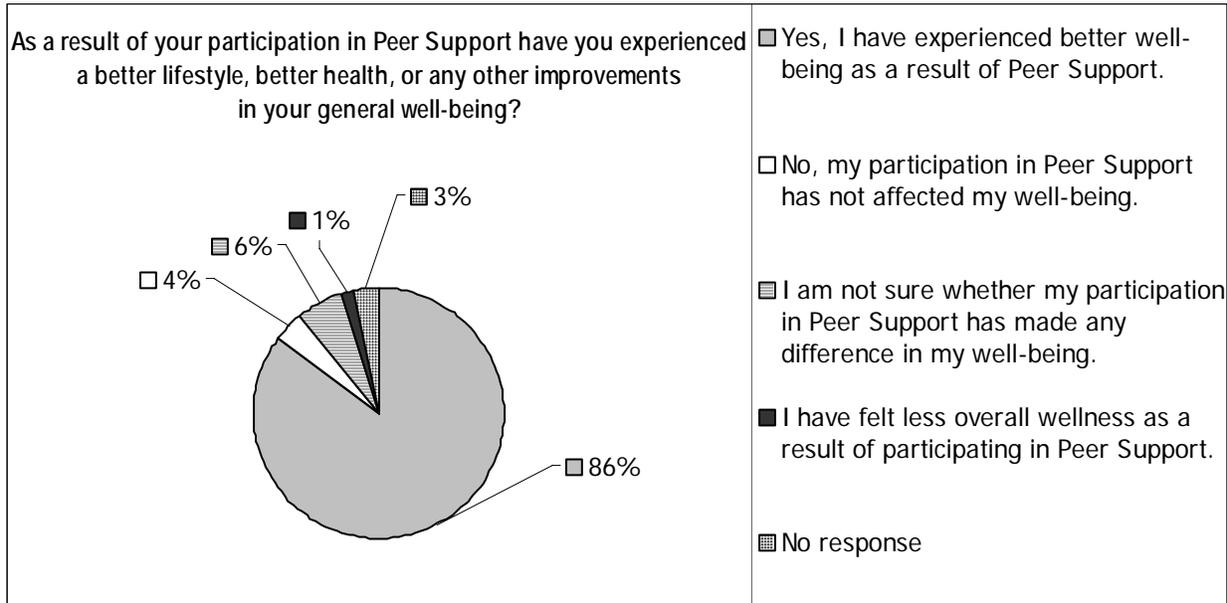


If transportation were more available, 24% of those surveyed would come to the PSA more often. For 70%, it would not make a difference.

- ...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*
- *...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*

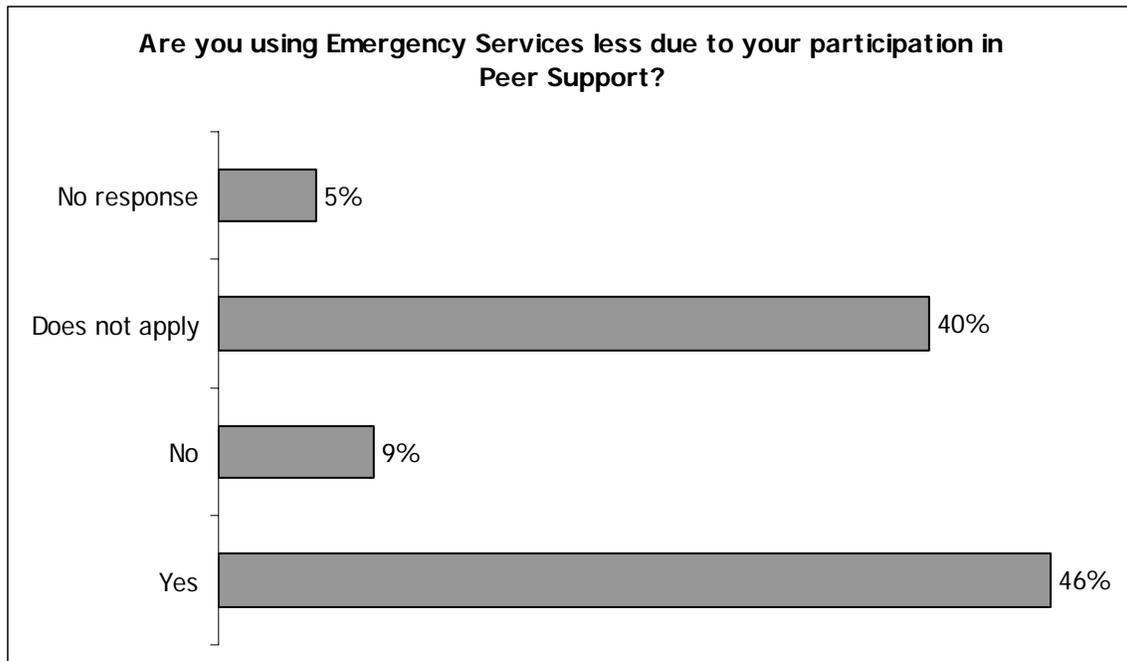
Question 4



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

- *...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*

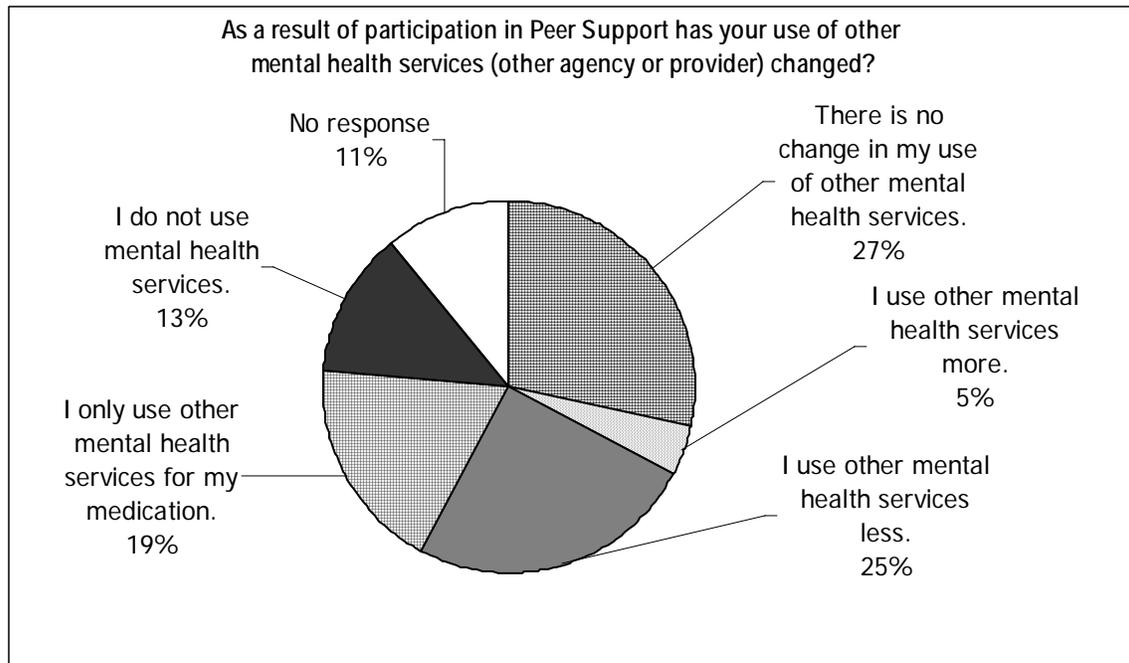
Question 5



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

- *...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

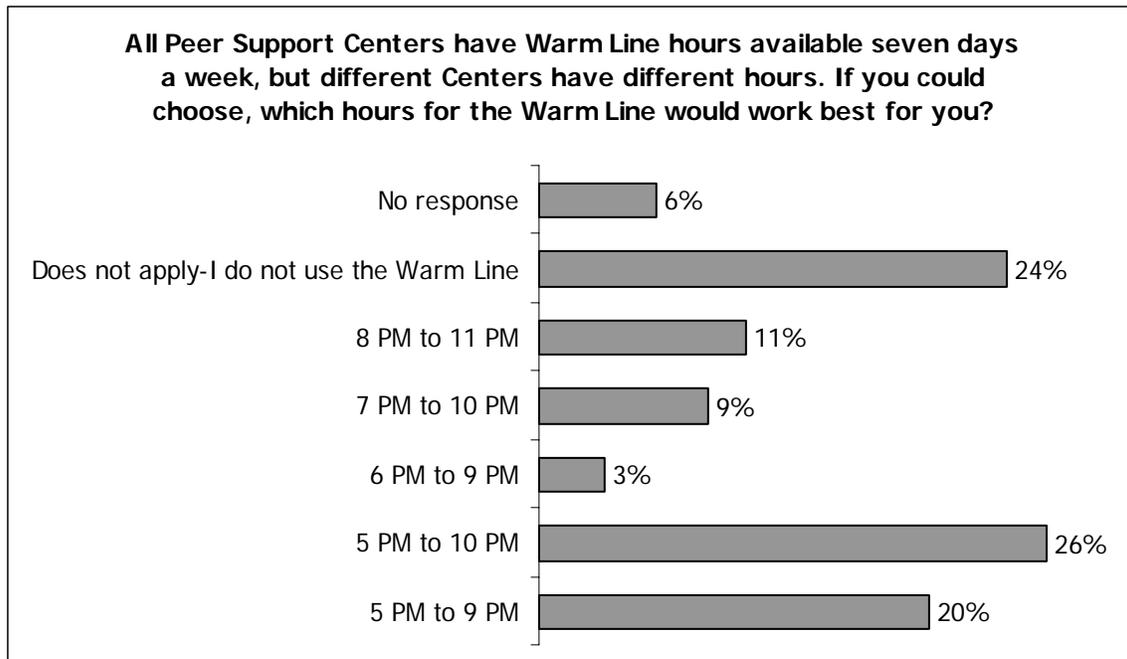


One quarter of people taking the survey report using less mental health services due to peer support.

Thirteen percent do not use mental health services and 19% use them for medication management only.

- *...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



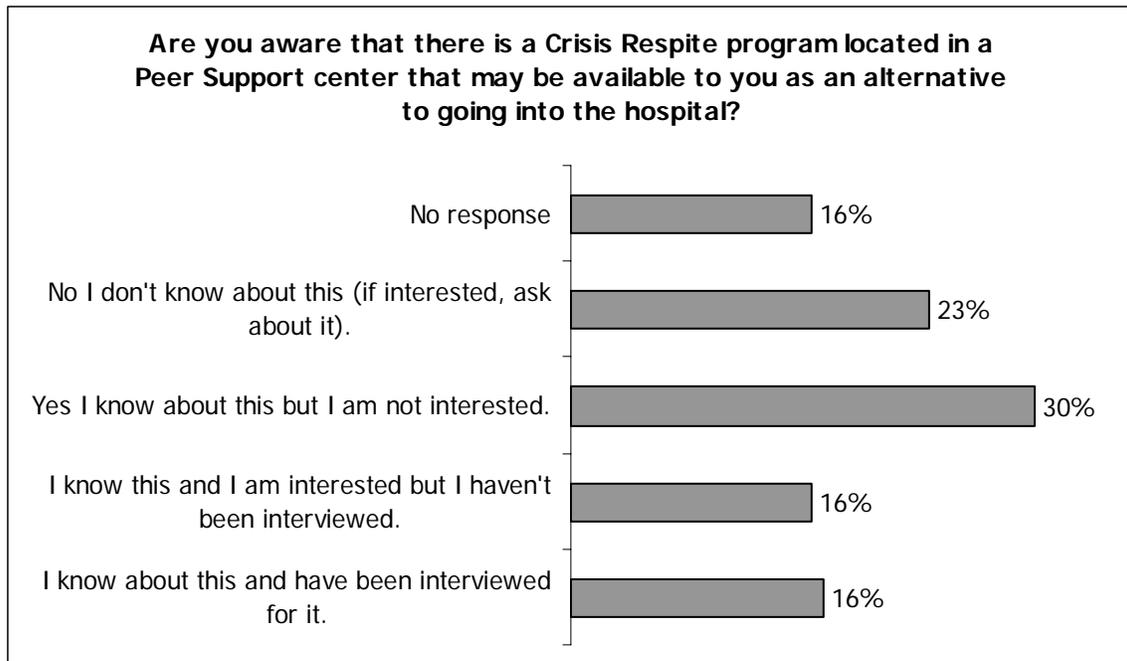
Over 25% of those taking the survey reported that Warm Line hours of 5 PM to 10 PM worked best for them.

32% selected other hours that fit within that range, but that started later or ended earlier.

11% preferred a service extending to 11 PM.

- *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



30% of people taking the survey reported being aware of, but not being interested in, the Crisis Respite program.

23% did not know about the program.

16% reported awareness and interest, but had not been interviewed for the program.

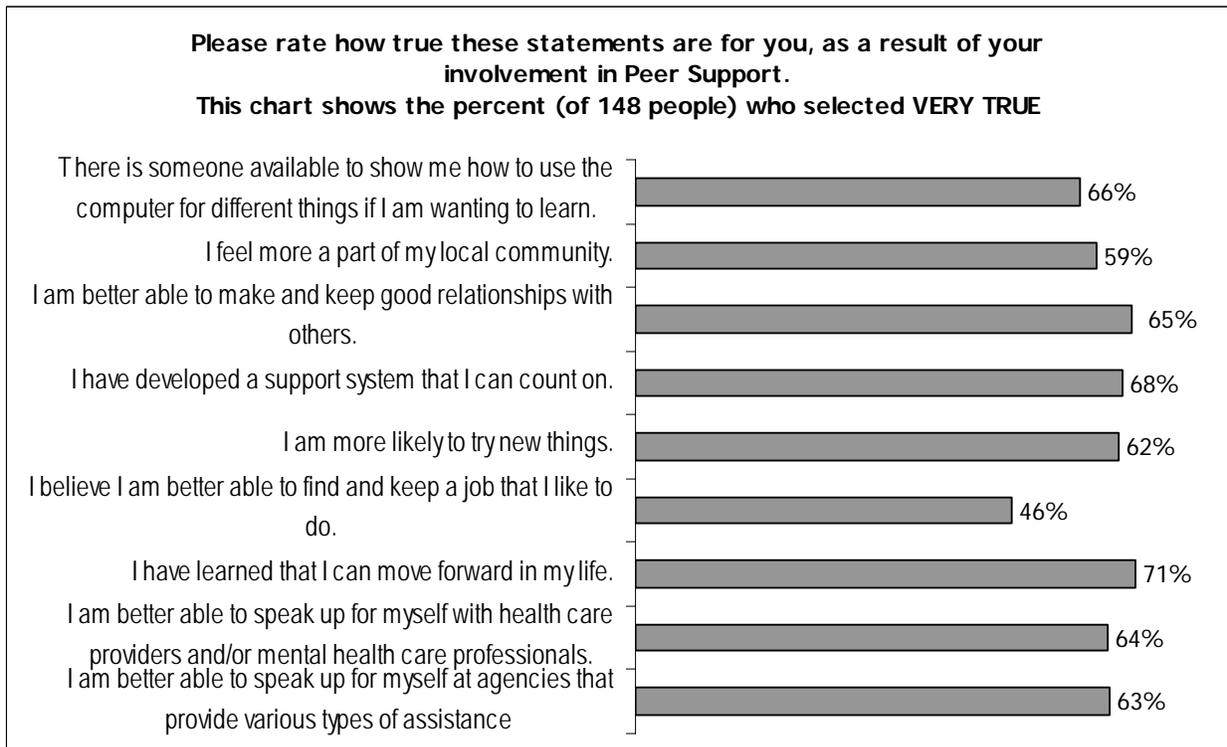
16% of those surveyed have been interviewed for Crisis Respite.

- *...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.					
Answer Options	Not true at all	A little true	Fairly true	Very true	No response
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



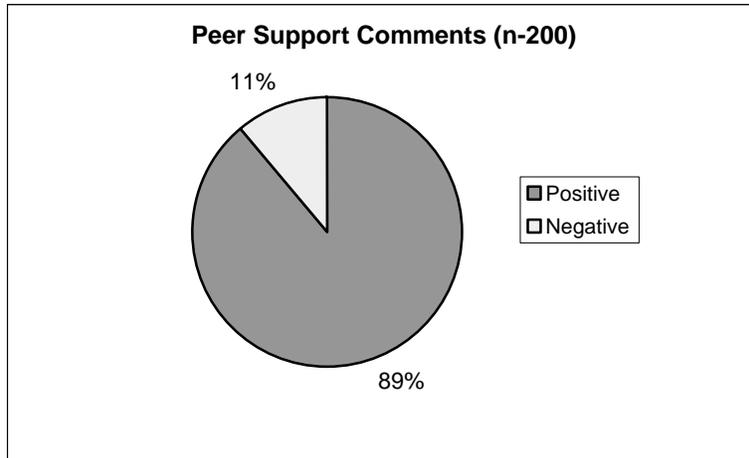
71% reported learning that they may move forward in life
68% noted having developed a support system that they may count on.
65% reported being better able to make and keep good relationships.
64% reported being better able to speak up for themselves with mental health service providers
64% reported being able to speak up more with agencies providing assistance such as food, benefits, housing, employment and other such supports.
59% reported feeling more a part of their local communities, due to peer support.
62% reported they were more likely to try new things
66% reported access to help with computer skills, at the PSA, if desired.
46% reported believing they are better able to find and keep a job they like to do.

- *...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

The survey results and the comments show that the majority of members had positive experiences with peer support and the Peer Support Agency at which they participated.

Of the 200 comments related to peer support, 178 (89%) were positive and 22 (11%) were negative. Identifying whether a comment belonged in the “positive” or “negative” category was somewhat of an opinion but it was fairly easy to tell which was which, for this purpose.



Peer support participants who took the New Hampshire survey clearly view themselves as benefiting from peer support through the peer support agencies.

The comments contributed by the NH survey participants make up six core themes, clearly seen as important to their wellness and recovery.

- Safety**
- Support**
- Relationships**
- Life Skills**
- Health**
- Self Regard**

One comment that perhaps expresses the common peer support 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.”

ALL COMMENTS EXACTLY AS ENTERED

Question 1: 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 helpful. 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
- Since it betgan

Question 2: 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 orginal 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: 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.
- 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 asome
- 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: 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 overtaking 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!
- 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: Are you using Emergency Services less due to your participation in Peer Support?

- NO BUT THINK ABOUT IT IF THINGS DON'T 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 occasion.
- I haven't needed emergency services since I have Peer Support
- Have not used any emergency services
- 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: 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 treatment 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 treatment 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
- I have been ill for over thirty years and (the center) has helped me overcome some of my social inaticiaes

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?

- 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.
- Sometrhimes 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
- thae checked time is when most people need the additional assistance.
- I have other peers phone numbers, which I use in leiu 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 ifi needed help.
- I don't need to use the warm line I am most comfortable with the support I receive at the wellness supportenter here I can share with everyone which is what I need for my recovery people here I can depend one
- i like to talk with other members it help 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

Question 8: 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 interviewed 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: 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
- 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 involved with peer support.
- help with a safe house for people who have no where to go
- i have been using computers since second grade so i don't 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.
- everything i answer is true.
- I already know how to use 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 and 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 a lot of things I never was told and in turn helped to make my life better

...The End...