



Introduction to NC Peer Justice Initiative Coalition

Welcome to the NC peer and “consumer” movement!

Peer Voice NC (PVNC) has been charged by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), to establish a North Carolina’s statewide peer and “consumer” organization dedicated to establishing a unified voice of people with lived mental health and/or co-occurring substance use disorders to impact peer and recovery-oriented policies, practices, and systems.

The NC Peer Justice Initiative (PJI) is a coalition of NC CPSS that have experience with the criminal and/or juvenile justice systems that are committed to advancing the intentional and authentic use of forensically trained peers throughout all “intercepts” of the sequential intercept model of justice systems.

PJI is being organized for several purposes:

- 1) Elevate the voices and expertise of CPSS that have been directly involved in “justice” systems,
- 2) Advance awareness, credibility and career ladders for CPSS that have previous “justice” system involvement,
- 3) Create training and credentialing for Forensic Peer Support in NC,
- 4) Impact policy and reform efforts of formerly incarcerated and returning citizens, using their wisdom,
- 5) Establish an inventory of existing programs, initiatives, jails, prisons, courts, that currently utilize peer support from CPSS with previous justice involvement,
- 6) Create funding streams and increase the number of initiatives in NC focused on the use of forensic peer support for pre-arrest, pre-booking, pre-trial, pre-sentencing, post arrest/booking/sentencing, re-entry, specialty wellness/recovery courts, etc.

NC CPSS’s with lived criminal justice experience are currently working in environments throughout the state, as Peer Support Specialists, in Wellness and Recovery Courts, Felony Diversion, MAT within jails, teaching classes and providing support in jails and prisons, and supporting re-entry while

incarcerated and upon release. NC CPSS with this lived experience work with Stepping Up Initiatives, Criminal Justice Services, represent on local, statewide and national Re-Entry Councils, work within FIT programs, returning citizen organizations, housing, and are actively engaged in policy work such as “Ban the Box.”

Other states, such as Texas, Pennsylvania and Georgia, to name a few, have robust Forensic Peer Support initiatives funding and related policies. SAMHSA has recognized Forensic Peer Support, using the Pennsylvania curricula, as a national credential. In NC, the workforce of CPSS with lived criminal justice experience represents a passionate, skilled and committed perspective that must be valued, recognized and utilized for reform, prevention and re-entry efforts.

FORENSIC PEER SUPPORT WITHIN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM
3-DAY TRAINING FROM PENNSYLVANIA MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMER ASSOCIATION AND
DREXEL

“Forensic Peer Specialists embody the potential for recovery for people who confront the dual stigmas associated with serious mental illness and criminal justice involvement”
(Davidson and Rowe, 2008)

Description:

This training is a comprehensive and realistic approach to facilitate peer support and advocacy within the criminal justice system. Using a dialogue-driven process participants are given opportunities to develop their voice and connect with others. Grounded in the recovery philosophy, peer support principles and guided exercises using the Sequential Intercept Model this training is designed to focus participants on the system and culture of criminal involvement. The mutual learning process uses lived experiences to identifying real-life hurdles as a tool to develop “doable” action steps to overcome them.

Learning Objectives:

Be the end of this training participants will be able to:

- Define the role of peer support within the criminal justice system
- Discuss the critical skills required for effective peer support within the criminal justice
- Demonstrate use of the Sequential Intercept approach in support of justice involved individuals

- Identify the resources needed to effectively engage and navigate the criminal justice system
- Practice developing plans to address the challenges and impact of the culture of incarceration on behavior

There are some very strict criteria for becoming a Forensic Peer Support Specialist in PA. (Each state can set their own requirements) Even stricter criteria for teaching it. *The credential is nationally recognized by SAMHSA.* PMHCA, OMHSAS and Drexel have created the fidelity for the required standards that each trainer must adhere to:

1. Minimum two Certified Trainers per class (must be at least one Advanced Level Facilitators with another trainer to provide the Train-the-Trainer Course).
2. Optimal class size 20, Max 25 participants per class (Very experiential training).
3. CPS or CRS certification is a prerequisite to attending training.
4. The FPS Curriculum (PMHCA, OMHSAS and Drexel University of Medicine) must be cited.
5. Evaluations Must be completed and turned in to PMHCA. (That is how PMHCA tracks the number of individuals receiving the certification).
6. To become an FPS trainer a CPS/CRS must have already received the FPS certificate from the three-day FPS training.
7. To become an Advanced Level Facilitator (ALF) the FPS Trainer must then co-facilitate a 3-day Train-the-Trainer class with another ALF.
8. All trainers are required to contact PMHCA about any scheduled trainings and provide copies of sign-in sheets and evaluations afterwards. We also like to advertise the trainings if possible.

The 3-day FPS training teaches:

1. The disparity and over representation of people who have mental health challenges who are CJ (criminal justice) involved
2. The 11 steps of the criminal justice process
3. The Sequential intercept model (The 5 points of the criminal justice process where people can be intercepted for diversion programs and how the deeper into the system the person gets the less chance for diversion)
4. How to partner with courts, judges, DA's, other stakeholders etc. to create diversionary programs
5. How to best serve on CJABS (criminal justice advisory boards)
6. How to best use lived experience with the CJ system to support those with mental illness

Sequential Intercept Model

