

WATERVILLE PEER RECOVERY CENTER PROGRAM SUMMARY

Peer services are a vital element of a recovery-oriented system of care and supports for people experiencing mental health and substance use challenges. A peer center provides a variety of peer-to-peer opportunities located in one place to equip and empower people to connect, grow, learn, and support each other in moving towards what they want to experience in their lives. The Waterville Peer Recovery Center will function as a “consumer operated service program” as described in this program overview.

GOALS:

- Waterville Peer Recovery Center Participants will feel accepted, uplifted, and empowered—experiencing hope and the reality of recovery.
 - Accepted, because they are valued just as they are;
 - Uplifted, by a warm, upbeat, welcoming community culture;
 - Empowered, because they have opportunities through peer support and education to gain knowledge and skills; and
 - Believing in hope and recovery, because they see it happening in their own lives and in the lives of their peers.
- Lives and minds will change because of their own strength and resiliency and the support they provide each other, as they learn new things and come to believe more fully in their own worth, their hopes and dreams, and their ability to achieve them.
- The Waterville Peer Recovery Center will develop into a well-known, respected, and integral resource in the broader Waterville area community of care. It will exemplify the important role and positive outcomes that an authentic peer-run, recovery-focused community plays in people’s lives.

CENTER OPERATION & ENVIRONMENT

Initial Hours of Operation:

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|------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| Monday: | 10 am to 3 pm | Thursday: | 10 am to 8 pm |
| Tuesday: | 10 am to 8 pm | Friday: | 10 am to 5 pm |
| Wednesday: | 10 am to 5 pm | Saturday: | 9 am to noon |

Center Environment – Physical

Main Community Room

The physical environment, especially the large main community room, will be open, comfortable and inviting. One side will have two conversation areas with living room furnishings. The other side will have large round tables with chairs for dining, game playing, group conversations, classes, etc. A corner or two will be set up with a chair and a lamp, for those who want to sit on their own to read, write, check their phones, or just take things in from a distance. Just inside the room’s entrance, a welcome desk will serve as the focal point for information, signing in, signing up for peer support or classes, resource materials, orientation for visitors/new members, and easy access to staff. In the center of the room the ceiling features a skylight, letting in lots of sunlight with all its symbolic possibilities.

Additional Rooms

Additional rooms will provide space for classes and meetings, art, music, library with computer access, and quiet meditation. The music room will start out with instruments, including a guitar, music stand, and electronic piano for Participants to use. The library will be built to include recovery-related books, materials, audio/video offerings, as well as other works of fiction and non-fiction, and two computer stations. The quiet room will have a glider/rocker, plants, a small water appliance, and meditative music available. The kitchen facilities off the main room will provide very adequate space for meal preparation and a base for cooking/nutrition classes.

Center Environment – Experiential

Greeting/Tour

When new people visit the Center, they will be warmly greeted by a staff person, welcomed to the Center, and offered a tour. The staff person will begin to make a connection with the person and learn something of their worldview (first two tasks/steps of Intentional Peer Support) during the tour and initial conversations. When any member arrives at the Center, they, too, will be greeted and engaged and encouraged to share what they're hoping to experience at the Center that day.

Information

The visitor/potential member will be offered a packet of orientation materials designed to provide more details about what the Center offers and how it functions. The packet will include the Center's brochure, the current month's calendar of events, the Behavior Agreements and Restorative Options policies, a center map, a staff and Advisory Council information sheet, and the minutes of the previous two community meetings. It will also feature a New Member Information Survey, which will ask the usual basic information and also what they are looking for in terms of peer support, support groups, classes, activities, etc., and what they think would be helpful to their recovery, as to skill-building, employment readiness, resource linkages, community involvement, etc.

Peer Support

Peer support, in its various forms, will underpin everything that goes on at the Center. From informal support of one person to another, to spontaneous conversations or appointments with peer support specialists and structured groups, the culture of the Center will build on and cultivate the many benefits of peers (people with similar lived experiences) having meaningful, compassionate, mutual relationships with each other.

STRUCTURES, VALUES, PROCESSES – CONSUMER OPERATED SERVICE PROGRAM

The overarching structure of the center will reflect the principles of a Consumer Operated Service Program (COSP). COSPs are independent, peer-run programs that, in general terms, offer mutual support, community-building, services, and advocacy. It is governed by the participants within agreed-upon structures, values and beliefs, and everyday processes that help things run smoothly and remain true to the COSP model. Being a COSP also requires detailed recordkeeping of what happens at the Center including attendance, participation,

linkages to other resources in the community, trainings and groups held, and minutes of meetings that include decision-making activities.

The following structures, developed with the help of its Advisory Council (AC), will guide the operations of Waterville Peer Recovery Center when it opens in October 2017. All of the structures will be subject to review and revision by the membership, after the community gains sufficient experience with them to do so. Feedback and suggestions will be sought and gathered all along the way, and formal review will likely take place during the second year of operation.

Advisory Council: The current AC consists of 6 members, who have served to guide the proposal submitted to DHHS for the Center and will continue to guide the work leading up to and following the Center’s opening. They will meet with the Center manager regularly to address all aspects of the Center’s operations and planning. The AC makes decisions by seeking consensus, finalized by democratic vote.

Community Meetings: Community meetings will be held on a regular schedule, during which members will discuss and make decisions around all aspects of community life. A variety of other mechanisms will be in place that give opportunities for members to voice concerns, provide input, make suggestions, and participate in solutions.

Behavior Agreements and Restorative Options: It is important for any community to agree together on its “norms” and expectations for how people will interact with each other, care for the programs and property, and address issues or conflicts that arise. The AC and the Center manager developed initial structures to guide the community in those areas:

Behavior Agreements are based on shared values, with specific expectations to which each member agrees, as follows:

| Behavior Agreements – “To the best of my ability, I will...” | |
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| <i>KINDNESS & RESPECT</i> | Use a friendly and respectful tone of voice. Speak truthfully and directly, free of sarcasm, insults and blame. Advocate for myself when I believe someone has behaved disrespectfully. Share space and resources with everyone else in the Center. |
| <i>MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS</i> | Take responsibility for my own thoughts, feelings and needs. Maintain healthy and supportive peer relationships with Participants and staff. Utilize Restorative Options when issues or conflicts arise or involve me. |
| <i>MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION</i> | Share my experiences, wisdom, and preferences, and make suggestions for improvement and positive changes. Follow through on my commitments, such as attending classes/meetings and completing tasks. |

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| | Attend Center activities only when I am free of the influence of alcohol and illegal substances. |
| <i>CARE OF PROPERTY</i> | Take care of the Center’s property and equipment and leave things at least as clean and orderly as I found them. Do my part to keep the Center clean and maintained. Be responsible for my personal property while at the Center. |
| <i>SAFETY</i> | Leave all weapons, including pepper spray, at home and understand that these are not allowed at the Center. Recognize the personal space of others and respect their boundaries. Immediately talk to staff when someone’s actions or language causes me to feel unsafe. Follow emergency procedures and participate in practicing safety drills. |
| <i>DIVERSITY</i> | Honor differences, knowing they make our community rich, interesting, and welcoming to all. Show consideration for everyone’s individual abilities, beliefs, ideas and worldviews. Abide by the Center’s policy of nondiscrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability or genetic information. |
| <i>STAFF: PEER SUPPORT & EMPOWERMENT</i> | Encourage others to make their own choices and celebrate their autonomy. Refrain from offering unsolicited advice. Share past and present experiences with integrity, free from any agenda or expectations of others. Be open to learn from others’ wisdom and experience. |

Restorative Options provides a common understanding and language with which to have conversations to address various levels of disagreement or conflict, as follows:

1. Acknowledgment Conversation: This first option serves as a quick and simple resolution to relatively minor instances of disagreement, hurt feelings, misunderstandings, reactions, etc. The goal is that the parties work out their own resolution and reconnection by acknowledging 1) something they did that affected the other, or 2) feelings or thoughts they have about something the other person did that affected them. Examples: “I want to acknowledge that when I cut you off in group today, it wasn’t an OK thing for me to do.” Or “I want to tell you that when you cut me off in group, I felt embarrassed and I thought my opinion must not matter to you.”
2. Clearing Conversation: A clearing conversation gives the opportunity to talk in more depth to “clear the air” in a calm, safe way, without rebuttal or argument, where the listener reflects or restates what s/he hears the speaker saying. The goal of a clearing conversation is to *understand* each other’s views and move towards solutions that work for both. It is *not* at all necessary to *agree*. There are five basic steps to completing a

clearing conversation, which are 1) to ask permission and negotiation when and where; 2) the speaker expresses facts, feelings, and thoughts; 3) the listener reflects back what the speaker is saying until the speaker is “complete;” 4) reverse roles, if desired, and listener becomes the speaker, until “complete;” and 5) negotiate solutions, with either making concrete requests and/or expressing their intentions, as applicable, for moving forward.

3. Facilitated Clearing Conversation: Participants may request the assistance of a trained peer facilitator to help prepare for a clearing conversation, assist in simple facilitation of the *process* in a clearing conversation, or to help clarify statements and/or reflections during a clearing conversation (*if and only if* both participants agree that it would be helpful and only in particularly “stuck” moments). In keeping with the principles and tasks of Intentional Peer Support, it is always the intent to support all parties (hold multiple truths) and to do the very least amount necessary to ease participants’ mutual understandings. It is never the intent to rescue Participants from discomfort or to offer direction or interpretations that steer the conversation in any way.
4. Restorative Team Conversation: There may be circumstances where the first three options do not adequately address or resolve a situation. The purpose of the team is to completely hear out all parties in order to reach clarity and offer a resolution plan. The team will consist of five trained Participants who volunteer and serve with the approval of the AC and the Participant community. The team could be utilized to resolve situations or instances such as: participant(s) are not willing or able to take part in the other options; behavior agreement(s) not kept on an ongoing basis, after engaging other options; egregious incident that involves suspending or reinstating membership; or multiple parties involved in a larger conflict.
5. Formal Complaint/Grievance Procedure: When a Participant is unable to reach resolution through the other options, particularly if the unresolved issue is with the manager, staff, or a Restorative Team decision, they may file a formal complaint with the Executive Director of NAMI Maine. The AC will work in conjunction with the Center manager and the Executive Director of NAMI Maine to fully develop the protocol and necessary forms to effectively implement this option.

By-laws or guidelines that include all of the ongoing structures, values, and processes will be developed in the first year of the Center’s operation by the AC, the members, and the manager, all of whom identify as peers.

STAFFING

In keeping with DHHS requirements, the Center will have a full-time CIPSS onsite manager. Elaine Ecker, currently NAMI Maine’s Peer Education & Training Manager, will serve in that capacity. Two part-time CIPSS will be hired and volunteer CIPSS will be actively recruited as well. It is the intention to have two paid staff on duty at all times, though there may be instances when only one is available. At least one paid staff will be present at any and all times the center is open.

EDUCATIONAL & SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Items 1-3 are the core classes/courses that will be offered on a rotating basis, with Items 4-7 offered at least annually:

1. Inspiring Minds
2. Wellness & Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)
3. Maine Can Work
4. NAMI Smarts for Advocacy
5. Emerge from Stigma Speaker's Bureau Training
6. Personal Advocacy & Shared Decision-Making
7. WRAP for Work

The ongoing core structured support group that will be offered: NAMI Connections with Inspiring Minds principles and skills.

Additional educational and support group opportunities may be offered, if the community requests them and facilitators and any necessary funding is available, such as:

- Pathways to Recovery
- Peer Support 101 or Healthy Connections
- Whole Health Action Management (WHAM)
- Alternatives to Suicide Support Group
- DBSA Support Group
- Hearing Voices Support Group

The Center will actively participate in the Maine Association of Peer Support & Recovery Centers (MAPSRC), electing a representative delegate to serve, and will promote any trainings or educational opportunities they make available to members. The Center will also participate conscientiously in applying for and using the grants and other funds MAPSRC makes available. The Center manager is the current vice-president of MAPSRC.

EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SUPPORTS

In addition to the Maine Can Work and WRAP for Work classes, the Center will arrange periodic visits by the Community Work Incentive Counselor (CWIC), so that members can discuss their unique circumstances as it applies to SSI/SSDI, benefits, and work. The many services and opportunities available through the Augusta and Skowhegan Career Centers will be publicized and promoted to members, as will adult education and post-secondary education opportunities. Linkages with Vocational Rehabilitation will also be facilitated, according to member choice and eligibility. Volunteering will be encouraged both within and outside the Center, as a way to experience meaningful activity and gain skills toward employment.

COMMUNITY LINKAGES

The Center manager will actively cultivate relationships and collaborations within the Waterville community in order to facilitate connections and opportunities for members to engage in meaningful activities, supports, and connections in the community. Some have already been

initially established through Memoranda of Agreement. Those efforts will continue and information will be regularly shared between the linked organizations and services, so that informal referrals and connections can happen in both directions.

ACTIVITIES, ENRICHMENT, FUN

Most of what happens in this category will be chosen and planned by the members. The proposal and budget now includes monthly art and cooking classes and quarterly out-of-area outings. There will be many other possibilities, and could include as yoga, dance, drumming, Tai Chi, knitting/crocheting, acting, music, and other crafts and creative classes and sessions. Also, the Center can participate in community events, such as Harvest Fest, Taste of Waterville, Maine International Film Festival, Craft Weekend, and Halifax Days. There are many low-cost or free opportunities through local colleges, such as concerts and recitals, talks and lectures, films, and indoor and outdoor tracks. There are also recreational areas and trails maintained by the City of Waterville and other local organizations. Opportunities abound! Let's go!