

Peer Specialist Integration Project: Process evaluation

In Fiscal Year 2017, TIEMH was contracted by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to evaluate the Peer Specialist Integration project. To this end TIEMH researchers conducted a process evaluation of all activities Via Hope presented in conjunction with this project. Over the course of the year, Via Hope hosted a webinar entitled *Fact and Fiction about Certified Peer Specialists in Texas*, a webinar entitled *The Nuts and Bolts of Peer Specialist Roles and Hiring*, and a technical assistance phone call that expanded on the content of the second webinar. For these presentations, TIEMH assessed: the planning process, recruitment, activity delivery, and participation and participant engagement.

1) Planning process. Via Hope began planning for the events in November 2016. The PSI project lacked a dedicated project coordinator, which presented challenges to the planning process. At project initiation, Via Hope intended to hire a coordinator, however this role remained unfilled.

The content for the first webinar was developed by Via Hope staff and a program director from HHSC. Content development occurred up to the date of the presentation. The content for the second webinar was developed by a training associate from the Yale Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, who co-presented the webinar. Material for the technical assistance call was also developed by the training associate from Yale.

2) Recruitment. For the two webinars, email invitations were sent to a list of individuals subscribed to a Via Hope mailing list. The invitations contained a link to a registration form. Participants from the second webinar were invited to the follow-up technical assistance phone call.

3) Activity delivery. The first webinar was facilitated by two Via Hope staff members, a program director from HHSC, and two Certified Peer Specialists. Via Hope used Adobe Connect to host this webinar. It lasted one and one-half hours. The second webinar was facilitated by a training associate from the Yale Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation and two certified peer specialists. The Yale training associate also hosted the technical assistance phone call. The second webinar and technical assistance call were hosted on GoTo Webinar. The sessions lasted two hours each. Some technical difficulties affected the execution of the activities. For the first webinar, presenters were unable to connect to the webinar as scheduled. Additionally, some participants needed assistance connecting to the webinars. Finally, background noises interfered with the presentation of both webinars.

4) Participation and participant engagement. A total of 262 people registered for the three presentations. Of these, 122 participated in the presentations. Registrants represented 92 organizations. Participants represented 32 organizations. Researchers tracked the amount of time participants spent logged in to the session to determine level of engagement. The average participant session time for the first webinar was 72 minutes (total session time was 90 minutes). The average participant session time for the second webinar was 98 minutes (total activity session time was 120 minutes). The average participant session time for the technical assistance call was 89 minutes (the total activity time was 120 minutes).

As Via Hope continues to develop the PSI project, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Plan projects based on existing staff capacity.
- Identify peer specialist integration experts to develop permanent content (e.g. online toolkits)
- Identify a staff person with technical knowledge of webinar platforms to manage presentations
- Record webinar presentations for those unable to attend the webinars and post on the Via Hope website
- Provide objectives for online activities to better inform participants

