

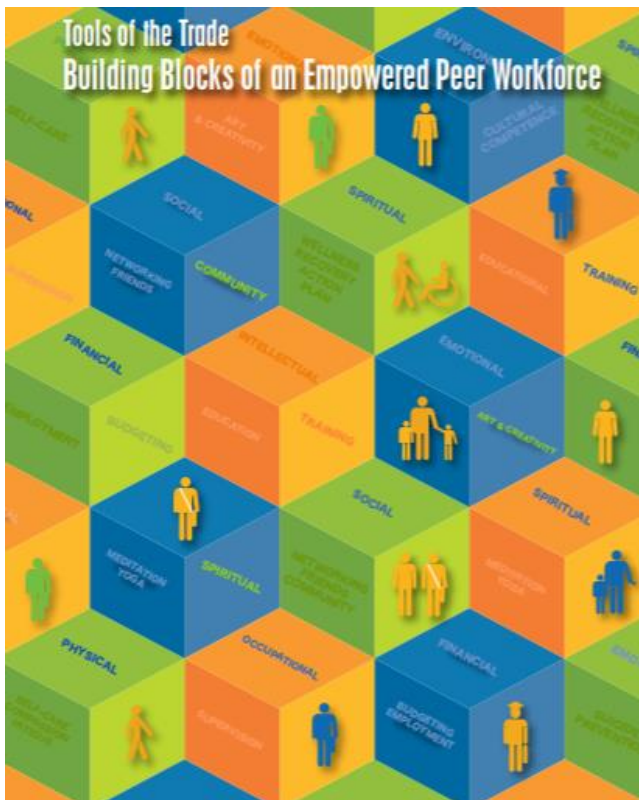
## Virtual Community News Digest

### July 6, 2018

### Featured Event – Thursday, July 19!

12<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference for Working  
Peer Specialists in New York City

New York University | Kimmel Center  
**SOLD OUT!**



*([Click here](#) to view the conference program.)*

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Welcome to the  
News Digest, a summary of  
upcoming events, articles,  
research opportunities,  
resources, job openings and more  
for the peer workforce in New  
York State.

News Digest is developed as part  
of the Academy of Peer Services  
Virtual Learning Community  
(VLC) project.

Visit our VLC site:

[www.aps-community.org](http://www.aps-community.org)

# Medical Alert



## **Office of Mental Health Medical Alert**

Hot summer temperatures have been associated with an increase in heat-related symptoms and even deaths. Pattern and trend reviews of OMH incident reports have confirmed these findings. Individuals receiving antipsychotic medications are at particular risk of heat stroke and neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS) during periods of extreme heat, which is more likely in poorly ventilated rooms. Children and the elderly are at increased risk. In addition to monitoring individuals at risk, including any people placed in seclusion or restraints during and after such episodes, prevention is paramount. [Read More....](#)

## **Letter from the Coordinator**

We hope you're finding places to stay cool and enjoying the summer. For some of us, we can take a break and enjoy some well-deserved vacation time. For others, we're working as hard as ever to bring some hope and healing. In either case, we wish you all the best.

We now are in the last month of Term 2 for the Academy, which closes on July 27. In the What's New section, you'll learn more about what's coming in the Fall. We hope you enjoy this edition of the Virtual Learning Community Newsletter.

Rita Cronise, Virtual Community Coordinator,  
[academy.virtual.community@gmail.com](mailto:academy.virtual.community@gmail.com)

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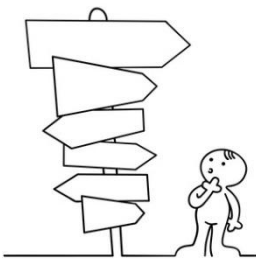
## What's New?

### Academy of Peer Services (APS)



The countdown is on. Term 2, 2018 is in its final month, which ends Friday, July 27.

If you have questions about the Academy of Peer Services (APS), check the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) posted on the APS site or send email to: [academyofpeerservicesnyomh@gmail.com](mailto:academyofpeerservicesnyomh@gmail.com)



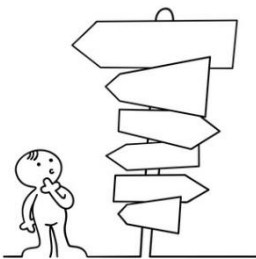
### Is it a training question or a certification question?



versus



When you have a question, it is important to know whether it is a question about the online training or a question about certification because the Academy of Peer Services and the Certification Board are separate organizations with different purposes. Only questions related to the online courses go to the Academy of Peer Services FAQ or support team (listed above). If you want to know about obtaining, upgrading, or renewing a certification, it would go to the [New York Peer Specialist Certification Board](#). Applications for the different certification are on the website: <http://nypeerspecialist.org/> or you can send email to: [info@nypeerspecialist.org](mailto:info@nypeerspecialist.org).



### Is it a questions about mental health or substance use peer support certification?

Information about peer certification under the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services [OASAS] is on a separate site: <https://www.oasas.ny.gov/recovery/PeerServices.cfm>.

Peer Support for Substance Abuse is a separate certification program that is not affiliated with the Academy of Peer Services or the New York Peer Specialists Certification Board.)

## Virtual Community Live Dialogue: A Tale of Two Consortia (Review):



In last month's Virtual Learning Community "Live" session (June 20), we learned about the [Regional Planning Consortium](#) (RPC), a network of 11 regional boards comprised of stakeholders who work closely with State agencies to guide behavioral health policy in the region, problem solve regional service delivery challenges, and recommend priorities for reinvestment of Medicaid savings. Five of the Coordinators for the RPC, Emily Hotchkiss, Margaret Varga, Maryam Zoma, Alexis Harrington, Peter Griffiths, joined us for this Live Dialogue session to report on peer initiatives or projects that invite peer involvement.

We also learned about the [New York City Peer and Community Health Workforce Consortium](#) (NYC.PCHWC), an initiative of [Thrive NYC](#) to improve mental health services in New York City by expanding the use of peers and community health workers to connect New Yorkers to services and promote recovery. We were joined by the Project Director, Lori Tannenbaum, and Project Coordinator, Aviva Cohen, as they shared some of the results of recent studies and toolkits that are now under development to assist organizations and the peers they hire.

[Presentation Slides](#) | [Recorded Webinar](#)

By popular demand, these groups will be featured in future VLC "Live" sessions. Watch for details in coming issues of the newsletter and on the Virtual Learning Community site.

## Next Live Dialogue will be APS Coming Attractions – What's New for Fall 2018



The Academy of Peer Services website will have a fresh new look, new functionality, and enhanced accessibility in Fall Term. In the next Live Dialogue the APS Design and Technical team will give a preview of what's new and what to expect. The next Virtual Community "Live" Dialogue will be on August 9, at 11:00 am.

Mark your calendar and [Register here](#) to receive information to join us and learn more.

## APS Mobile – Your Experience Survey:



APS site upgrades have enabled limited mobile functionality. We encourage you to try accessing the courses now using your smart phone or tablet and give us feedback on your experience.

Mobile survey: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/APS-Mobile\\_Q](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/APS-Mobile_Q)

## Getting Organized! Virtual Learning Community Charter – Join Us!



Members of the Virtual Learning Community are developing a Charter to direct future activities, including webinars, support groups, networks for peers and supervisors, research and more.

The Virtual Learning Community is an inclusive opportunity for all involved in the peer support workforce. Subgroups for different roles in the peer workforce will be forming based on interest and availability people in those roles to participate.

Join us to become a charter member to define the future direction of this exiting community.

- Online planning meetings are on the Third Tuesday of each month from 3:00 – 4:30 pm.
- Online support meetings are on the First Tuesday of each month from 7:00 – 8:30 pm.

[Join](#)

Click the Join button to receive an invitation to join the Virtual Learning Community listserv (Google Group) with announcements about upcoming meetings and progress on various projects of the Virtual Learning Community.

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## Deadlines



**August 10, 2018**

***Deadline to submit a proposal for the 2018 International Association of Peer Supporters (iNAPS) Conference, Reinforcing Our Roots: Designing Our Future***

*The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual iNAPS Conference will be held December 3-5, at the DoubleTree Hotel at the Entrance to Universal Studios, Orlando, Florida.*

**[Call for Presentations](#)**



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# Article

## Independence for All

by Howard Diamond



Hey everyone, this month the United States of America is celebrating Independence Day on July 4. Three cheers for the red, white and blue!

Wave those flags proudly and find some patriotic songs to sing. Look at me, I will not be singing out loud, but only singing to myself. Continuing ... fly those balloons and kites, just like Benjamin Franklin did in colonial times. Eating

hamburgers and hot dogs, potatoes and coleslaw and whatever floats your boat. Sinking is not allowed or even encouraged by this writer.

Enough digressing, we need to discuss independence. Everyone can achieve independence, but we have to learn how to get there. We probably know that there are many ways to either define or describe independence. Let's start with just one of them: independence **is freedom from the control, influence, support, aid, or the like, of others**. This is can either be as a group effort (like a country doing their own thing), or as an individual making themselves a sufficient person. For each of us we have to decide what is best for ourselves and try to attain it one thing at a time. Positive reinforcement and support is the key. Yes, just like Peer Specialists do!

For independence is not only a word, it can be a feeling, also. Many people with some sort of mental health issues have been told that they can never be independent from their "illness". It took me a long time to get to the place where I felt strong and independent. Once I felt like I had finally found my feeling of independence, I learned what other people say, think or feel about me didn't matter. Sometimes, it still matters, but for the most part, it doesn't. By the way, this does not work for everyone and it was good for me.

For many years, I have struggled to figure out where my independence is with my Anxieties and my Obsessive Thoughts. However, I've learned and practiced something extremely amazing during my journey. This is my top five of many, many more.

[Independence doesn't mean we have to be alone](#) . It means knowing when and where to ask for help. Reach out and talk with someone special or anyone that can provide assistance

[Independence doesn't mean not caring what people are saying to you and about you](#). It's letting individuals know enough is enough and telling them when to stop.

## Independence for All (continued)

**Independence doesn't mean taking on tons of work or responsibilities.** This means learning to say no. Remember, no is a complete sentence. We are only one person and we can handle so much.

**Independence doesn't mean having lots of friends.** It means figuring out what type of people you should be surrounded by and then doing just that.

**Independence doesn't mean doing whatever you want.** It means prioritizing and making important decisions that will affect the rest of your life. No one can do whatever they want

Most importantly, independence means being proud of what you have accomplished and all you've been through, instead of being ashamed of your past mistakes and the struggles of life.

Of course, I shared independence and responsibilities for over twelve years with my significant other, Maureen. There were good times and bad times. Significantly, we became more independent because of one another. Sweetie, I miss you, I love you and I still wish you were here.

For all USA readers, **HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA!** For everyone, be and have independence. from whatever you choose. See you in the Newsletter. – Howard, a Peer from Long Island.

Send personal articles or blogs about your life as a Peer Specialist or Supervisor to:  
[academy.virtual.community@gmail.com](mailto:academy.virtual.community@gmail.com)

The deadline for the next publication is August 1, 2018.

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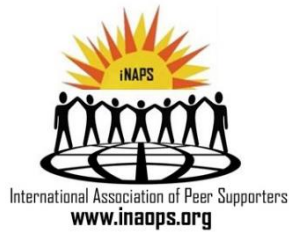
## Upcoming Events



The Virtual Learning Community Calendar on our website lists upcoming events. <https://aps-community.org/calendar/>

If you have (or know of) an event that should be shared with the Academy of Peer Services community, send an email to [academy.virtual.community@gmail.com](mailto:academy.virtual.community@gmail.com).

## Featured Events



**July 6, 2018**

Webinar | 12:00 – 1:00 pm

**A Look at Veteran Homelessness from a Peer Specialist Perspective**

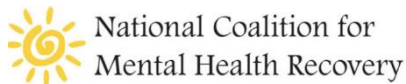
Register [Here](#)



**July 9, 2018**

**Regional Advisory Committee (RAC)**  
Office of Mental Health Facilities  
Pre-Registration Required  
(See sites in the Online Registration System)

**Register Online**



**July 10 (deadline extended)**  
**Nomination for Peer Leaders**  
Alternatives 2018



**July 10, 2018**

2:30 pm to 4:30 pm  
New York, New York

**How to start a tenant advisory council**  
Community Access



**July 10, 2018**

Webinar: 3:30–5 p.m. Eastern Time  
**Substance Use Disorders in the Zero Suicide Framework**  
Online





**July 11, 2018**

Webinar | 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

**Ask Me Anything: Employment Series  
(Question and Answer Session)**

Fabricio Balcazar  
Boston University Online



**July 12, 2018**

Webinar | 1:00-2:30 p.m.

**Making the Shift: From Patient  
Activation to Community Activation**

Sue Bergeson, Crystal Brandow, Wendy  
Ellis, Margaret Walkover, and Chacku  
Mathai  
SAMHSA Online



**July 12, 2018**

**Social Capital Training:  
Community Integration**

Presented by Garrett Smith, OMH  
Regional Advocacy Specialist  
Syracuse, New York



**July 13, 2018**

Webinar | 11:00 – 12:30 p.m.

**Preventing Burnout and Supporting  
Peers in the Workforce**

Presented by Kirsten Muckstadt, OMH  
Regional Advocacy Specialist  
OMH Webex Online



**July 16, 2018**

6:15 PM – 8:00 PM

**Mental Health Triologue: Trauma & Psychopharm**

East Village Access, 242 East 2nd Street,  
New York, NY 10009  
Institute for the Development of Human  
Arts (IDHA)



**July 18, 2018**

9:00 am – 4:30 pm

**Confronting Health Inequity: Let's Get Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable**

Albany Hilton, Albany, NY

**REGISTER**



**July 19, 2018**

**12<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference for Working Peer Specialists**

New York University | Kimmel Center  
New York City

**Learn More**



**July 20, 2018**

Start Time: 2:00 pm

**New York City  
Peer Recruitment Open House**

Community Access  
New York



**July 24, 2018**

Presented by Garrett Smith, OMH  
Regional Advocacy Specialist  
**Social Capital Training: Community  
Integration**  
Syracuse, New York



**July 24, 2018**

Webinar | 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.  
**Fostering Community  
Wellness: Addressing Toxic Stress and  
Adverse Community Events**  
Crystal Brandow, Jasmine  
Brandow, Ruben Cantu, Larissa  
Estes, Richard Smith,  
SAMHSA Online

**SAMHSA's Homeless and Housing Resource Network**  
**People with Lived Experience  
Spotlight Series**

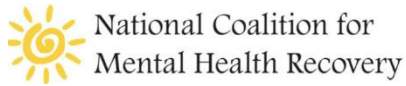
**July 25, 2018**

Webinar: 1:00 – 2:15 pm  
**Unique Housing Needs of Individuals  
with Criminal Justice Histories**  
SAMHSA

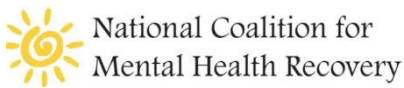


**July 26, 2018**

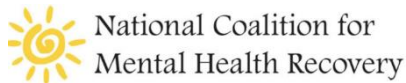
10:00 am – 4:00 pm  
**Spring into Wellness - Baltic Street's  
1<sup>st</sup> Annual Mental Health & Wellness Fair**  
25 Flatbush Ave., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11217  
For more contact Yasmin (718) 774-1027  
or Shana (718) 377-6568 ext. 352



**July 29-August 3, 2018**  
National Coalition on Mental Health Recovery (NCMHR)  
**ALTERNATIVES Conference 2018**  
Catholic University of America  
Washington, DC  
[Learn More](#)



**July 30**  
**Advocacy training**  
NCMHR - Washington, DC



**July 31**  
**Alternatives Conference Hill Day**  
NCMHR - Washington, DC



**July 31**  
**Webinar: 2:00 – 3:30 pm**  
**Peer Specialists' Techniques for Suicide Prevention, Crisis, and Transformation**  
Eduardo Vega  
Doors to Wellbeing Online



**August 2-3, 2018**  
**Getting Approval for SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, and other entitlement programs, presented by John Allen**  
Attend In-Person:  
229 Washington St.  
Watertown, NY 13601  
(see below for registration and online links)



### OMH SSI, SSDI, Medicaid Training (cont.)

- Thursday, August 2, 2018, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. ([WebEx Day 1](#))
- Friday, August 3, 2018, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. ([WebEx Day 2](#))

Live Training in Watertown.  
To attend online click the link for each day above.  
Event number **648 860 231** (both days)  
Password **nysomh123** (both days)



**August 6-8, 2018**

### Mental Health National Youth Convergence

Doors to Wellbeing – Dream Team  
Washington, DC

[Learn More](#)



**August 6-8, 2018**

### SAMHSA Voice Awards

Los Angeles, California  
(Register to Attend Live or Online)

[Register](#)



**August 17, 2018**

### 25<sup>TH</sup> BiCounty Empowerment Conference

Touro College, Central Islip  
(Must Register to Attend)

[Nassau Registration](#)

[Suffolk Registration](#)



**September 12-14, 2018**  
**NYAPRS Annual Conference**  
Honor's Haven (new location)  
Ellenville  
[Learn More](#)



**September 20-21, 2018**  
New York State  
**Suicide Prevention Conference**  
Desmond Hotel and Conference Center  
Albany  
[Learn More](#)



**September 26-29, 2018**  
National Association for Rights Protection  
and Advocacy (NARPA)  
Annual Conference  
Holiday Inn Inner Harbor, Baltimore  
[Learn More](#)



**October 18, 2018**  
**Global Peer Support Celebration Day**  
Worldwide Event  
(More details as they become available)



**October 24-25, 2018**  
**2nd Annual Peer Specialist Conference**  
(New York Peer Specialist Certification  
Board)  
Troy, New York  
(More details as they become available)





**November 28-30, 2018**

World Federation for Mental Health  
International Trauma Summit

Houston

[Learn More](#)



International Association of Peer Supporters  
[www.inaops.org](http://www.inaops.org)

**December 3-5, 2018**

International Association of Peer  
Supporters (iNAPS)  
12th Annual Conference  
**Reinforcing our Roots: Designing our  
Future**

DoubleTree (Hilton)

Entrance of Universal Studios, Orlando

[Call for proposals](#) due August 10

*More details coming soon*



Is there anything else that should be listed?

**Send events of interest to the peer support workforce  
to the Virtual Learning Community:**

[academy.virtual.community@gmail.com](mailto:academy.virtual.community@gmail.com)

The deadline for the next publication is August 1, 2018.

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## Research Studies



Myla Adams, a Marymount University graduate student, is in the dissertation phase of her doctoral program where she is seeking volunteers for the study, “Ethical Decision Making & Certified Peer Specialist: An Exploratory Study”. The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study is to explore the ethical-decision making processes for Certified Peer Specialists and common ethical dilemmas they face.

If you are interested in participating in this study please follow this link, where you will find the informed consent form, survey requirements, directions, and questions.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SGTNP9D>

(Reprinted from the International Association of Peer Supporters June Newsletter)



Is there a research study or article that should be listed here?

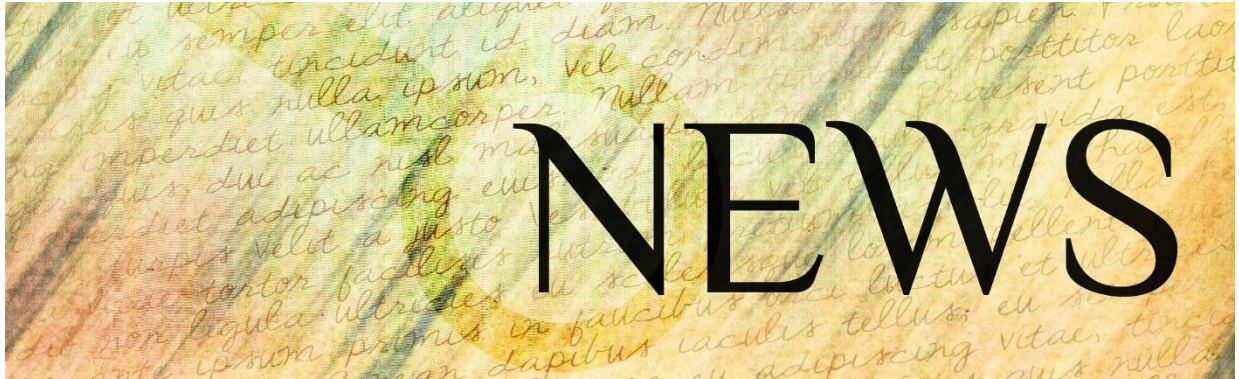
**Send research studies that are seeking peer participation to the Virtual Learning Community:**  
[academy.virtual.community@gmail.com](mailto:academy.virtual.community@gmail.com)

The deadline for the next publication is August 1, 2018.

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## Resources

### Selected Newsletters (links listed in alphabetical order)



[Café TA](#)

[Care for Your Mind](#)

[Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery \(WRAP\)](#)

[Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance \(DBSA\) Peer Leadership Center](#)

[Disability Rights New York](#)

[Icarus Project](#)

[Institute for the Development of Human Arts](#)

[Intentional Peer Support \(IPS\)](#)

[International Association of Peer Supporters \(iNAPS\)](#)

[Live & Learn Services \(employment and more\)](#)

[Mad in America](#)

[MH Mediate \(conflict resolution\)](#)

[National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse](#)

[NYAPRS eNews Bulletins](#)

[Mindfreedom](#)

[Wellness Recovery Action Plan](#)

[Words of Wellness \(Swarbrick & Nemeč\)](#)

**Send newsletters for this list to the Virtual Learning Community:**

[academy.virtual.community@gmail.com](mailto:academy.virtual.community@gmail.com)

The deadline for the next publication is August 1, 2018.

## An Update on the Update

The Key Update, newsletter of the National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse is moving to the Temple University Collaborative on Community Inclusion. To subscribe (or to continue to receive) this informative newsletter, send email with "subscribe" in the subject to:

[selfhelpclearinghouse@gmail.com](mailto:selfhelpclearinghouse@gmail.com)

## Latest Issue of the OMH News



The latest issue of the New York State Office of Mental Health's newsletter, [OMH News](#), provides updates on some of the many programs and projects we have underway to help us achieve our mission of promoting the mental health of all New Yorkers.

*OMH News* is published for people served by, working, involved or interested in New York State's mental health programs.

## Now Available: [2018 National Recovery Month Toolkit and PSAs](#)



National Recovery Month is held every September to emphasize the importance of preventing substance use and promoting positive mental health. The 2018 observance will be an opportunity to increase awareness and understanding, celebrate recovery, and honor people in recovery. The featured theme, *Join the Voices for Recovery: Invest in Health, Home, Purpose, and Community*, reflects this year's focus on integrated care, leadership, and supportive community contributions to effective treatments and sustained recovery.

The 2018 Recovery Month Toolkit and public service announcements are now available for review and download. You can use these materials to organize events, increase community and public awareness, and encourage people to seek the help they need.

## [2018 National Recovery Month Toolkit and PSAs](#)

## Resources continued

[Peer Support Canada](#) is offering the opportunity to view the presentation slides from their recent

*National Conference on Peer Support 2018*

[View the Conference Program](#)

[View the Presentations](#)

Send other continuing education resources we can include on the Virtual Learning Community to:

[academy.virtual.community@gmail.com](mailto:academy.virtual.community@gmail.com)

The deadline for the next publication is August 1, 2018.

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## Job Listings



### Featured Job Position

**New York City**

**[Peer Workforce Consortium Director](#)**

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

*(Submit application by July 14)*

Visit our Job Bank for a complete list of the most recent openings.  
The Job Bank is updated regularly. <https://aps-community.org/job-bank/>

If you live in or near New York City, there is a Peer Job Board specifically for New York on the Coalition for Behavioral Health site: [http://www.coalitionny.org/the\\_center/jobs/](http://www.coalitionny.org/the_center/jobs/)

## Employers – are you seeking qualified candidates?

If you have not already done so, register your business with the New York State Department of Labor and submit your job opening to the [Dept. of Labor Job Bank](#) before submitting it to the Academy of Peer Services Virtual Community. The Governor's [Employment First](#) initiative is tracking the number of people with disabilities who are being hired, and openings for Peer Support positions should be counted in this initiative. Once you have created a business account and submitted the job to the Dept. of Labor Job Bank, you can send the job description to us to be posted.



Submit your job openings for peer specialists or other roles in the peer workforce to:  
[academy.virtual.community@gmail.com](mailto:academy.virtual.community@gmail.com)

We will post your openings in the Virtual Learning Community Job Bank (website) and in this newsletter.

## APS Virtual Learning Community

We are a network of peer specialists working together to plan ways to provide support, education, and advocacy for the peer workforce in New York State.



Click the Join button to receive an invitation to join the Virtual Learning Community listserv (Google Group) with announcements about upcoming meetings and progress on various projects of the Virtual Learning Community.

Online planning meetings are on the Third Tuesday of each month from 3:00 – 4:30 pm.

Online support meetings are on the First Tuesday of each month from 7:00 – 8:30 pm.

**Join**

(The moderator will approve your request to join.)



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## Spread the News!

If you have job openings, resources, or announcements of events to share, send email to [academy.virtual.community@gmail.com](mailto:academy.virtual.community@gmail.com).



Visit the Virtual Learning Community website: [www.aps-community.org](http://www.aps-community.org) to learn more.

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## Join Us for the Next Live Event!

**Preview of Coming Attractions: Academy of Peer Services**  
Thursday, August 9, 2018 | 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

### What are the “Coming Attractions?”



The Academy of Peer Services is getting an upgrade with the start of Fall Term on August 27, 2017. If you are enrolled in the Academy (or considering taking courses in the Fall), you’ll want to tune in to make a smooth transition.

In this session you’ll learn about the contemporary new theme, system for enrollment, navigation, learning paths, and enhanced ways to track course completion, as well as changes to accessibility functionality. In addition to upgrades to the Academy of Peer Services site, we will cover the Virtual Learning Community Charter and benefits of becoming a charter member.

In this session you’ll learn about the contemporary new theme, system for enrollment, navigation, learning paths, and enhanced ways to track course

Register for the Virtual Learning Community Live Dialogue on August 9, 2018 to learn more!

[Register Now](#)