Virtual Community News Digest
August 8, 2018

Featured Event
– Thursday, August 9!

Preview of Coming Attractions:
Academy of Peer Services
Fall Term Upgrade

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 preview what’s new and what to expect. Join the “Live” Dialogue on Thursday, August 9, at 11:00 am to learn more.

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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
Letter from the Virtual Learning Community Coordinator

What a remarkable summer this has been. As I write this, a very close lightning strike is still reverberating in my chest. It is taking a few minutes to shake off the feeling of the electric buzz! I hope you’re finding ways to stay dry and helping the most vulnerable among us to do the same.

My assignment for this summer in the Academy of Peer Services has been to dig deeper into the history that shaped the peer supports and services to offer a more inclusive history on people of color, people who identify as LGBTQ, and the consumer/survivor movement for the core course on the Historical Roots of Peer Supports and Services.

In trying to understand why the historical roots have been so “white” and the stories of people of color remained largely untold, I turned to an article that I highly recommend to all Academy participants by Peggy McIntosh, White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack.

My research re-ignited outrage over forced displacement by European colonists of indigenous people from their native lands, the segregation and institutional racism toward African Americans, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and the sterilization and extermination of people with disabilities who were deemed by Eugenicists as “unfit to live.”

My research included conversations with people who had lived the history or knew people (now deceased) contributed to the history. When the Academy reopens in the fall, I hope you revisit the Historical Roots of Peer Supports and Services course and appreciate the additional multicultural historic events and people that shaped peer support services. Above all, what I hope you take away from this article and the course itself is the need to remain vigilant to discrimination, segregation, and oppression in any form, and that you continue to advocate for compassionate treatment for all.

More on what’s new with the Academy of Peer Services and the Virtual Learning Community in the next few pages, and Howard Diamond has written another insightful article on perspective. In this letter I wanted to just highlight the work being done now to give you a more complete perspective of our history.

Rita Cronise, Virtual Community Coordinator,
academy.virtual.community@gmail.com
What’s New?

Academy of Peer Services (APS)

Term 3, 2018 starts on Monday, August 27 with significant upgrades to the Academy website, which will be covered in a webinar on August 9. Also new for Fall term is a course about the New York Peer Specialist Certification Process and a course on Self-Care for Peer Specialists. Based on feedback, we are revising the Historical Roots of Peer Services course to present a more inclusive and multicultural history.

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

Is it training or certification?

When you have a question, it is important to know whether it is about the APS online training or about the NYS peer certification because the Academy of Peer Services and the New York Certification Board are separate organizations. Questions related to the online courses go to the Academy of Peer Services FAQ or support team (listed above).

Questions 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.

Is it about mental health or substance use recovery peer support certification?

In addition to the two organizations funded by the Office of Mental Health (OMH), there is also a separate recovery peer certification under the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services [OASAS]. For more about this certification: https://www.oasas.ny.gov/recovery/PeerServices.cfm.

Substance Abuse Recovery peer support is a separate program that is not affiliated with the Academy of Peer Services or the New York Peer Specialists Certification Board.)
What’s New (Continued)

Virtual Learning Community (VLC)

The Virtual Learning Community is a project of the Academy of Peer Services, intended to bridge the gap between the online learning and developing skills to put peer support into practice.

This newsletter is developed as part of the Virtual Learning Community. We also hold monthly webinars, planning meetings every other week, and will be starting weekly online support groups for peer supporters in September. Watch the September newsletter for more.

In the meantime, if you are an experienced facilitator of peer support groups (in person or online) and have an interest in joining our facilitation team, drop me a note with your experience in facilitating groups to academy.virtual.community@gmail.com.

Get Organized! Developing a 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. A recent workshop at the 12th Annual New York City Conference for Working Peer Specialists provided new ideas and input for the development of activities to meet the “real world” needs of peer specialists and their supervisors.

The Virtual Learning Community planning team welcomes all who are involved in the peer support workforce (volunteers, paid supporters, supervisors, and others who are involved in peer supports and services). 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. Planning meetings are held on the:

- First Tuesday of each month from 7:00 – 8:30 pm.
- Third Tuesday of each month from 3:00 – 4:30 pm.

Click the Join button to receive an invitation to the Virtual Learning Community listserv (google group) with announcements about upcoming meetings and progress on various projects of the Virtual Learning Community.
NYESS Work Incentives Navigator - New Features

Good Afternoon,

The New York Employment Services System (NYESS) team, in conjunction with the Employment First initiative, launched the Work Incentives Navigator (WIN) in February of this year. WIN is a tool to provide individuals with disabilities real time information about work and tax incentives that can help them on the path towards financial self-sufficiency, reducing reliance on public benefits.

Since its launch, eligible individuals with records in NYESS have been receiving real-time notifications about programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), section 1619(b) of the Social Security Act (continued Medicaid eligibility), and the Medicaid Buy-In for Working People with Disabilities (MBI-WPD). In addition, when these notifications are sent, providers that are utilizing NYESS can log in and see lists of individuals who were notified, follow-up with individuals based on the information provided, and identify potential barriers to people not receiving the notifications (i.e., no e-mail address, or a bad e-mail address).

We are pleased to announce that the next version of the WIN went live today, August 8th. We encourage staff to log into NYESS at https://my.nyess.ny.gov to access the portal and to familiarize yourself with the tool. To begin assisting individuals you will need to click on the WIN button on the menu page, where you can access the specific information regarding the people you are supporting. If you want to learn more about using WIN, tune into our webinar Thurs Sept 13th from 2:30-4:00 pm. https://meetny.webex.com/meetny/onstage/g.php?MTID=ef64faef93a62248835a39

If you have questions before that time please do not hesitate to contact us at 518-473-6579 or email andrew.karhan@omh.ny.gov, Andy Sink andy.sink@omh.ny.gov or Jessica Elliott jessica.ellott@omh.ny.gov. Thank you for your continued efforts to support individuals with disabilities on their road to financial self-sufficiency and independence.

Sincerely,

Andrew Karhan
Director of Employment Policy, NYESS
Project Director, PROMISE

Office of Mental Health
44 Holland Avenue, 8th Floor, Albany, New York 12229
(518) 474-9892 | andrew.karhan@omh.ny.gov
www.omh.ny.gov
What’s New (Continued)

Hiring Peer Specialists with a Criminal History

I’ve often heard both peers and providers say that the Criminal Background Checks are a barrier to hiring peers. But as a peer specialist, we may want someone with a conviction, who can prove rehabilitation and good conduct, to work with the people we serve. Here is some information on that process that you may find helpful for this situation:


Take care,

Tony Trahan
Deputy Director, Office of Consumer Affairs

Office of Mental Health
44 Holland Ave.
(518) 473-6579 | (518) 486-9687 | tony.trahan@omh.ny.gov
www.omh.ny.gov

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Deadlines

September 10, 2018 (deadline extended)

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

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

Call for Presentations
Welcome to August. Is everyone in the USA and the Northern Hemisphere regions of the world enjoying their summer? How about winter in the Southern Hemisphere are you having fun, fun, fun? Hot sun and snow, it only is a matter of how you view fun and enjoyment wherever you might reside. But do not look through those rose-colored glasses. Perhaps look at the rose itself and all of the myriad of colors it decorates the landscape with. Of course, snow is only white. At least until it gets dirty. Black and white are opposites, but are they really? It is what you see through your eyes and only your eyes.

Every person alive has their own perspectives about almost everything. Many different terms can be used here. Opinions, views and vision are just three. Each has their own distinct meanings, but they are only in one’s perspective. Most importantly each individual has their own way looking at stuff. Look, there are facts to support historical events, but when it comes to interpretation we are left to fend for ourselves. So, is the glass full or half empty. For me, I just observe the glass sitting on a table, neither half full nor half empty. Maybe, I am just being difficult. Me, being difficult, no way! But, that is how I see the situation.

Blue skies and green grass are what most people see. However, if you are color blind you see them differently. It is the same with people with Mental Health Issues. Many folks say or think “these” people cannot do this and don’t know how to do that. But hey, what do “they” know, anyway? Not much, is what I am thinking. That is why Peer Specialists like ourselves, and our views are so VERY IMPORTANT and crucial in leading the path to glory for the people we assist. Of course, this comes about one person at a time, but if most of us try to pitch in, the perspective can and will change drastically.

Time and again, Peer Specialists around the world working with other individuals share similar life experiences and unique perspectives. In addition, we can relate better and offer real validation where the professionals can only attempt to accomplish this feat. Does that look like something we do, hourly, daily, weekly? As it is said, as long as we try. Remember, without making the attempt, there will be little or no chance for success. Of course, what success actually means is open for discussion and perspectives. Some say, success can be measured in small increments and others believe it requires a completed process. Whichever works for each of you or if it is something else that is entirely offbeat, run and embrace the idea, because it is yours.
Article (Continued)

It has become crystal clear to me, that writing this piece about perspectives, is all basically from my perspective. Yes I know, my perspective is relevant, too. Therefore, I indeed will continue to share my thoughts with all the readers.

Comments are always welcome through the Virtual Learning Community email (academy.virtual.community@gmail.com). It is our news so let us share our perspectives with each other. Have fun and enjoy the season, wherever in the world you are. See you in the Newsletter.

Howard, a New York State Certified Peer Specialist from Long Island

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

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

Recent Research

Laysha Ostrow recommended the following research articles related to Peer Support that were published in June, 2018.


Send research studies or articles about Peer Support or Supervisor to: academy.virtual.community@gmail.com

The deadline for the next publication is September 1, 2018.
Upcoming Events

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

Featured Events

**August 8, 2018**
9:15 p.m. ET

Join SAMHSA for the 2018 Voice Awards!
Tune in to the live webcast.

[Register for Webcast](#)

**August 9, 2018**
11:00 a.m.

Preview of Coming Attractions
Academy of Peer Services Updates for Fall

[Register](#)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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| August 17, 2018 | 25th BiCounty Empowerment Conference  
Touro College, Central Islip  
(Must Register to Attend)  
[**Nassau Registration**]  
[**Suffok Registration**] |
| August 21, 2018 | Crisis Intervention Teams in NYC  
Give Feedback to Mayor’s Taskforce  
MCNY, 60 West St. Main Floor  
Reservations are required  
[Register] |
| September 12 | best|self behavioral health  
Career & Job Fair  
255 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14202  
[Learn More] |
| September 12-14, 2018 | NYAPRS Annual Conference  
Honor’s Haven (new location)  
Ellenville  
[Learn More] |
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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 20-21, 2018 New York State Suicide Prevention Conference</td>
<td>September 20-21, 2018</td>
<td>Desmond Hotel and Conference Center, Albany</td>
<td>Learn More</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 26-29, 2018 National Association for Rights Protection and</td>
<td>September 26-29, 2018</td>
<td>Holiday Inn Inner Harbor, Baltimore</td>
<td>Learn More</td>
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<td>Advocacy (NARPA) Annual Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 18, 2018 Global Peer Support Celebration Day</td>
<td>October 18, 2018</td>
<td>Worldwide Event</td>
<td>(More details as they become available)</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 24-25, 2018 2nd Annual Peer Specialist Conference</td>
<td>October 24-25, 2018</td>
<td>Troy, New York</td>
<td>(More details as they become available)</td>
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October 28-31, 2018
Reinventing the Behavioral Health Workforce: Implementing Innovative Solutions
New Orleans
Learn More

November 28-30, 2018
World Federation for Mental Health International Trauma Summit
Houston
Learn More

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 – deadline extended to September 10, 2018

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

The deadline for the next publication is September 1, 2018.
Resources

Selected Newsletters (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 & Nemec)

Send newsletters for this list to: academy.virtual.community@gmail.com

The deadline for the next publication is September 1, 2018.
September is Recovery Month
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

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

academy.virtual.community@gmail.com

The deadline for the next publication is September 1, 2018.
Job Listings

Featured Job Position

Albany

**Chief Operating Officer**
NYAPRS
(Posted 8/8/18)

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/](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](https://aps-community.org/job-bank/) before submitting it to the Academy of Peer Services Virtual Community. The Governor’s [Employment First](https://www.coalitionny.org/the_center/jobs/) 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

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

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PLEASE JOIN US AT OUR
CAREER & JOB FAIR
WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 12, 2018
4:00 - 7:00pm
255 DELAWARE AVE., BUFFALO, NY 14202

Bring your resume for open interviews!
Mental Health Counselor, LPN, Peer Advocate,
Physicians Assistance, RN Supervisor, Targeted Case Manager,
Customer Service, Maintenance, Housing Specialist,
Adult Health Home Care Manager, Children’s Health Home Care Manager.

Bilingual individuals encouraged to apply!

To view all open positions visit www.bests elfwny.org

We look forward to meeting you!
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.

(The moderator will approve your request to join.)

Share this Newsletter!

If you have job openings, resources, or announcements of events to share, send email to academy.virtual.community@gmail.com.

Visit the Virtual Learning Community website: www.aps-community.org to learn more.
Join Us for the 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.

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

[Register Now]