

Recovery to Practice Monthly Report

September 2011

National Association of Peer Specialists

This month, the NAPS' RTP team dealt with a variety of challenges but was able to produce a curriculum outline that appears to serve recovery knowledge gaps identified in the situational analysis for the profession.

As with previous RTP documents, the curriculum outline was distributed widely. The team had approximately 50 responses to first and second drafts requiring considerable editing and supplementation. As a result of this process, the following lessons were learned:

- There are considerable benefits in terms of investment by soliciting review and comments from many and diverse stakeholders—primarily peer specialists. Also, comments were thoughtful and helpful.
- Distributing draft documents and receiving input can be cumbersome.
- It appears as though distributing future draft curriculum documents will be somewhat more limited to ensure the timely performance of all RTP tasks. The RTP team will, however, distribute draft curriculum documents to key informants and to anyone requesting review.
- Although some reviewers did not completely recognize the scope of the RTP project, information provided will prove very useful during future phases of the project, including actual curriculum development.
- The curriculum outline, and subsequent curriculum, must be sufficiently flexible to account for facilitator “imprinting” and changing conditions.
- Interest in the NAPS RTP project is not abating. There continues to be much interest and a desire to contribute among the profession.

The RTP has contracted with several peers and a peer organization, to perform certain tasks. As a result of these contracts, the NAPS website has seen considerable expansion and ease of use. Plans have also been made to continue expansion in a cost-effective manner. Due to the interest and importance of overall wellness, the RTP has contracted to create a part-time position to focus specifically on this issue. The contractor will be heavily involved in writing the curriculum for this topic and also promoting/implementing this part of the curriculum.

Development of the curriculum outline consumed almost all of the RTP team's efforts and, in the process, developed an effective working relationship between DBSA staff, the curriculum consultant (Rita Cronise), website developers/consultants, the wellness consultant and the RTP project manager. The networks established and used during this month will serve the project well in the future. The NAPS RTP team is hopeful the effectiveness of these networks will apply to other stakeholders and advisors as they become more involved in curriculum development.

The NAPS RTP team has planned and coordinated representation at the Alternatives 2011 conference and the APA's IPS event. The team has also planned activities and task assignments for the next year of the project.

The RTP team has engaged in discussions with research staff from Boston University's Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation regarding evaluation of the effect of certain portions of the RTP curriculum on recovery. Instead of evaluating the effectiveness of learning, this endeavor would evaluate the effectiveness of the practices learned for those peer specialists serve. The Center expects to submit a grant proposal to the NIMH to fund this endeavor.

The NAPS RTP team is now focused on writing and pilot testing the curriculum. The curriculum outline will provide a valuable base for this and it is now time to actually write and deliver.