

Vocational Peer Support

Trainee Handbook and Toolkit

money recovery
success choose
VPS job satisfaction esteem keep career
future get dreams support

Debbie Nicolellis
and Lyn Legere



Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation

© 2015 Trustees of Boston University

Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
940 Commonwealth Avenue West
Boston, MA 02215
<http://cpr.bu.edu/>

Suggested citation:

Nicolellis, D. & Legere, L. (2015). *Vocational Peer Support Training Program: Trainee Handbook and Toolkit*. Boston, MA: Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation.

The production of the *Vocational Series in Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Recovery* was directed by Marianne Farkas.

The contents of this publication were developed under a grant with funding from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, and from the Center for Mental Health Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, United States Department of Health and Human Services (NIDILRR grant 90RT5033). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this project do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

ISBN: 978-1-878512-63-5

Acknowledgments

This work has been influenced by many. The invaluable work of Bill Anthony, Mikal Cohen, Marianne Farkas, Karen Danley, and our colleagues at the Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation have provided a robust basis for this work. The evidence-based Psychiatric Rehabilitation Process Model and Training Technology provided a foundation for this curriculum, as did the “Choose-Get-Keep” supported employment framework and process, which have been adapted here for use in peer practice. This work was informed and inspired by the various wonderful certified peer support training curricula from around the country.

We cannot thank the Transformation Center in Boston, MA, and its Executive Director, Deborah Delman, enough for their generous and instrumental support of the development and piloting of this curriculum. We celebrate the collaboration between peer and academic organizations, and we are grateful to have had the opportunity to bring to fruition an aspiration of ours, that of joining employment support and peer support to better serve people in recovery.

Our working advisory group has had a great impact on us and on this curriculum. We are moved by Shery Mead’s reminders in Intentional Peer Support to “learn with,” “scaffold,” and to “stay peer,” and we appreciate her support to echo those sentiments throughout this curriculum. Larry Fricks of the Appalachian Training Group helped us to find our center by encouraging us to concentrate on the beauty and power of Choose-Get-Keep. The encouragement of Peggy Swarbrick of Community Support Programs of New Jersey to add in a Social Security Work Incentives component has transformed the final training package. Lori Ashcraft of Recovery Innovations taught us much about the role that genuine caring and wellbeing plays in peer support and vocational recovery. Lastly, we thank Lori DiGalbo for her thoughts on ways that we could join vocational peer support and vocational rehabilitation systems.

We could not have gotten this curriculum off the ground without the generous commitment of time, energy, and feedback by the many peers who have allowed us to learn with them about vocational peer support. Our pre-pilot group from around Massachusetts helped us to initially think about the intersection of employment and peer support, the Pioneer Class in Boston, MA, helped us to work on our first drafts, and the Recovery Academy class in Grand Rapids, MI, helped us to understand the role of current work for peers learning about VPS; and to all of you, we are ever grateful.

And to those who worked with us for several years while utilizing VPS skills and tools in their practice every day, we tip our hats to you. The Peer Specialist Team at Advocates, Inc., under the direction of Keith Scott, the Recovery Coaches of Recovery Innovations in Phoenix, AZ, under the leadership of Lori Ashcraft, Gene Johnson, and Christopher Magee; and finally, the staff at Promise Recovery Network under the guidance of Cherene Allen-Caraco have made more than a substantive contribution. By using VPS in your work, and talking to us month after month, you have offered us the kind of guidance that only the true experts can extend.

Finally, we wish to thank those who provided funding, the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) and the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). We are grateful for your vision of, and unfaltering commitment to, improving employment outcomes for people diagnosed with psychiatric disabilities.

Debbie Nicolellis, Lyn Legere

How To Use This Material

The material within these pages are designed to be utilized within a classroom-training environment, but may be used for independent study as desired.

Here is what you will find within the Modules in this workbook:

1. Each Module has a different content focus
2. For ease, each Module has a “Content Guide” with a list of what is contained within
3. Overviews of each content area
4. Classroom Discussion Questions
5. Information about skills you will need to work with Vocational Peer Support
6. Examples of the process
7. Classroom Practice Exercises
8. Discussion Prompts for use in conversations with peers or to facilitate use of Tools
9. Tools to support explorations and decision-making in your work with peers
10. Tips and Pitfalls to Watch out for



Feel free to write in this book, to take notes, mark down answers for exercises and discussions, and even to doodle. This workbook is yours. You will receive a clean copy of the Tools, Discussion Prompts, and even some of the main points from each of the Modules in the VPS Toolkit. Once you start using the VPS Toolkit, make copies of the Tools to work with each person.

Course Introduction: VPS Training Program: The Basic Facts

VPS Training Program: An advanced specialization for peer specialists.

Goal of the VPS Training: To support peer specialists who wish to add information, skills, and tools needed to support vocational recovery.



VPS Teaching Methods

In the VPS Training, you might expect the following:

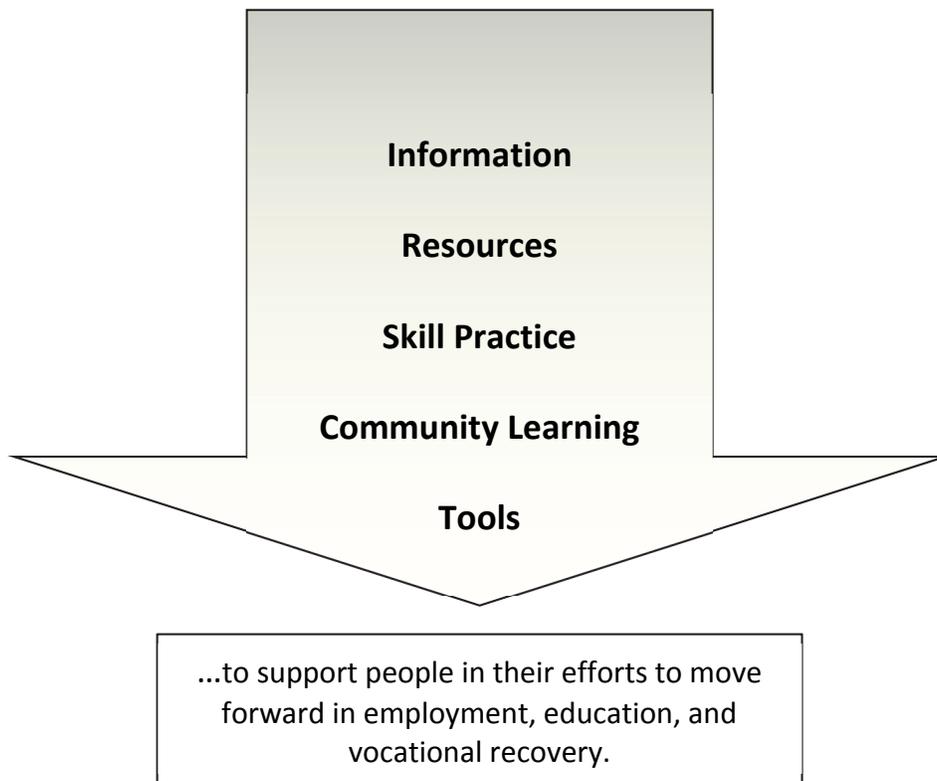
- Interactive teaching
- Lots of discussion
- A focus on skills
- Exercises to enhance experience with new tools
- Community Learning outside of class, to hone new skills in your work

VPS Training Topics

The table below lists the training topics covered in the VPS Training, by each Module.

Module 1	Overview of the Training Program Vocational Recovery & Vocational Peer Support
Module 2	Partnering to Support Vocational Recovery
Module 3	Building Motivational Foundations
Module 4	Supporting Choice in Work and Career
Module 5	Scaffolding Getting Into Jobs and School
Module 6	Keeping Work and School
Module 7	Coordinating with Employment Service Providers
Module 8	Researching Information
Module 9	Supporting People to Work While on Benefits (Optional 1-day Module)
Module 10	Using the Scaffolding: How do we keep this going?

What we will we walk away with?



Discussion:

What are you hoping to get out of this program?

What do the people you work with say about employment and educational goals?

Module 1

Vocational Recovery and Vocational Peer Support

What to Expect in Module 1

The Big Question of Module 1

- What do I need to know about VPS and Vocational Recovery as we start this training program?

Module 1 will introduce you to the concepts and general practice of Vocational Peer Support (VPS), and the context of Vocational Recovery. You will find in Module 1 descriptions of concepts, examples to illustrate processes, classroom exercises, and tools for your ongoing reference.

	Module 1 Table of Contents	Page
1.1	Vocational Recovery and Vocational Peer Support	10
1.2	Review of Peer Support Principles	11
1.3	What is Vocational Recovery?	12
1.4	So what are people up against when thinking about work?	13
1.5	Vocational Peer Support: Mission	14
1.6	Vocational Peer Support: Values	15
1.7	A Snapshot of VPS Activities	16
1.8	“Scaffolding” in Vocational Peer Support	17
1.9	Tool: “Scaffolding” in Peer Support	18
1.10	Module 1 Summary Exercise	19

1.1 Vocational Recovery and Vocational Peer Support

In Module 1: we will learn Information about:

- What is Vocational Recovery?
- What is Vocational Peer Support?
- What is Scaffolding in VPS?

Why look at work?

- Studies report that only 15% - 33% of people with psychiatric disabilities are working.
- Under-employment is a big problem: People with disabilities may work fewer hours, and even get paid less, than people without disabilities.
- **HOWEVER:** Research shows that most people with lived experience want to work – about 70% say they want to work!

What is the peer support role in supporting vocational recovery?

Assist people to decide IF they want to work,

Support people to figure out what they want to do for work or career,

Aid in the gathering of resources,

Support people to use their strengths,

And help people to get into and keep the kind of work they really want.
