Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant

Effectiveness of the Missouri Certified Peer Specialist Program

As of April 2012, 144 certified peer specialists (CPS) had been trained and certified as a result of the Mental Health Transformation State Incentive Grant. As part of the grant, Missouri was required to evaluate the effectiveness of the Peer Specialist Program. Information was gathered from pre-post data from mental health consumers receiving peer specialists services. This data was analyzed to determine program effectiveness.

Key Findings

Overall, clients receiving CPS services at Consumer Operated Service Programs (COSPs) and Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) showed improvement. Findings suggest that the CPS program:

- Had moderate positive effects on consumers’ recovery.
- Tended to increase life satisfaction, improve hopefulness, and offer consumers greater ability to advocate for themselves.

Consumers who received CPS services were generally satisfied with their services.

- These findings are encouraging, and suggest that the program is an important addition to services offered by the Department of Mental Health (DMH).

Study Details

- Study participants (n=129) were recruited from COSPs and CMHCs across the state (Table 1). Participants were placed into either a treatment group (receiving peer specialist services) or a comparison group (receiving only traditional mental health services).
- Participants were interviewed before or immediately upon receipt of CPS services and 6 month later (retention rate of 86%).
- Participants were asked questions from the Recovery Assessment Scale, and measures to assess life satisfaction (the Meaning of Life Scale), hope (the Herth Hope Index), and self-advocacy (the Self-Advocacy Scale).

Table 1. Participants by Type of Agency (n=129)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COSPs</th>
<th>CMHCs</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The additional support for clients is great. Good for peer specialists to give back and teach others what they have learned.”

- Peer Specialist Supervisor
Clients receiving peer specialists services showed moderate improvement.

Findings for the Recovery Assessment Scale revealed that while there was no change in the comparison group between program entry and six-month follow-up, the treatment group, on average, improved slightly (Figure 1). There was a marginally significant effect of having a peer specialist on the total scale (F(1,123) = 2.72, p = .102).

Willingness to ask for help improved for those consumers receiving peer specialist services.

One factor of the six domains of the Recovery Assessment Scale (Willingness to Ask for Help), was approaching significance (Footnote F test) (F(1,123) = 3.35, p = .069). Participants in the treatment group who received peer specialist services were more likely to be willing to ask for help than those participants in the comparison group at 6-month follow-up (Figure 2).

“The peer specialists listen well. They communicate in a very positive way, so they're very valuable.”

- Consumer

Figure 1. Recovery Assessment Scale Average Scores Treatment & Comparison Groups at Program Entry & 6-Month Follow-up

Figure 2. Recovery Assessment Scale Average Scores, Willingness to Ask for Help Subscale, Comparison Groups at Program Entry & 6-Month Follow-up F(1.123)=3.35, p=.060
Consumers receiving peer specialist services improved on all measures of the Recovery Assessment Scale.

Though the remaining factors were not significantly different from program entry to follow-up most trended in a positive direction. Table 2 displays the Recovery Assessment Scale means for the treatment and comparison group. The means for the treatment group improved slightly from program entry to follow-up, this trend was not observed in the comparison group.

Table 2: Average Scores for Recovery Assessment Scale, Program Entry and Follow-up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
<th>Comparison Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program Entry Average Score (n=55)</td>
<td>Follow-up Average Score (n=55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery Assessment Scale (1-5, 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal confidence and hope</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to ask for help</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal oriented</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rely on others</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not dominated by symptoms</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Treatment participants tended to do better than comparison participants on the Meaning of Life Scale, the Herth Home Index and the Self-Advocacy Scale.

Analyses were also conducted for the Meaning of Life Scale, the Herth Home Index and the Self-Advocacy Scale. Again, while differences were not statistically significant, treatment group participants tended to do better than comparison participants (Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5).

Figure 3. Meaning of Life Scale, Treatment and Comparison Groups at Program Entry and 6-Month Follow-up
Client Satisfaction

Overall, consumers receiving services from a CPS were highly satisfied.

- 87.0% of consumers feel they have a good relationship with their peer specialist.
- 83.3% of consumers feel their peer specialists go above and beyond their current job duties to help them.
- 85.2% of consumers say their peer specialist gives them hope for recovery.

“The peer specialist talks, listens, and share with me so I don’t feel so all alone.”

- Consumer

Conclusion

These findings suggest that the peer specialist program is having a moderate effect on the consumers who receive services from a CPS, especially on consumer willingness to ask for help. Additionally, the data suggest a positive trend in improving consumers’ life satisfaction, hopefulness, and their ability to advocate for themselves. Overall, these findings are encouraging.