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Community

Our peer run respite provides a welcoming space for people who feel overwhelmed, to have time, space and relationships that support their self-determination, healing and growth, recognizing that people are the experts on themselves.



The Ferns Peer Respite

a community for learning, healing and growing, recognizing that distress is a common human experience

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Afiya Peer Respite

Afiya's Mission

Afiya strives to provide a safe space in which each person can find the balance and support needed to turn a difficult time into a learning and growth opportunity.

<https://wildfloweralliance.org/afiya/>



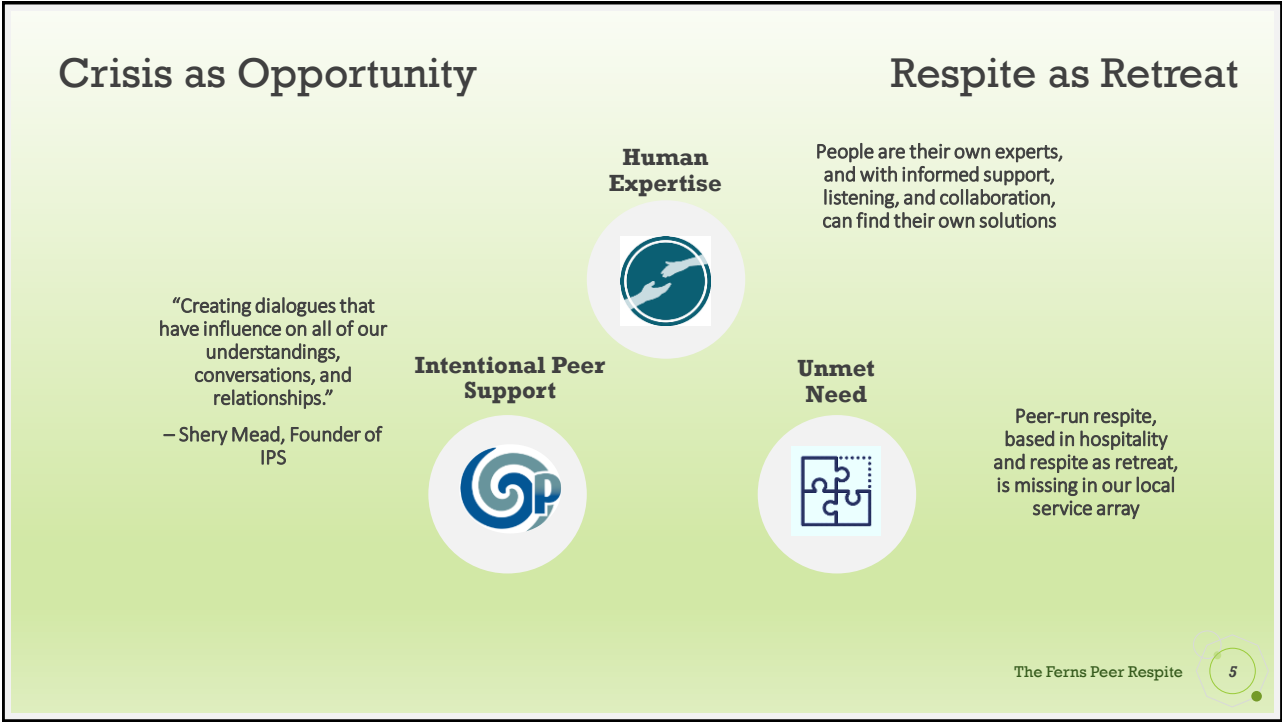
Afiya Film

<https://youtu.be/9x8h3LvEB04>

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3 principles and 4 tasks of Intentional Peer Support



intentional
peersupport.org
Peer Support is about Social Change



intentional peersupport

Peer Support is about Social Change

Intentional Peer Support is a way of thinking about and inviting transformative relationships. Practitioners learn to use relationships to see things from new angles, develop greater awareness of personal and relational patterns, and support and challenge each other in trying new things.

IPS is unique from traditional human services because:

- **IPS relationships are viewed as partnerships** that invite and inspire both parties to learn and grow, rather than as one person needing to ‘help’ another.
- **IPS doesn’t start with the assumption of a problem.** With IPS, each of us pays attention to how we have learned to make sense of our experiences, then uses the relationship to create new ways of seeing, thinking, and doing.
- **IPS promotes a trauma-informed way of relating.** Instead of asking “What’s wrong?” we learn to ask “What happened?”
- **IPS examines our lives in the context of mutually accountable relationships and communities** — looking beyond the mere notion of individual responsibility for change.
- **IPS encourages us to increasingly live and move towards** what we want instead of focusing on what we need to stop or avoid doing.

<https://www.intentionalpeersupport.org/what-is-ips/?v=b8a74b2fbcbb>

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Community Survey

If you have experienced a crisis or extreme distress, where did you turn to for help? What sort of resources did you find?

What was your experience with those resources?

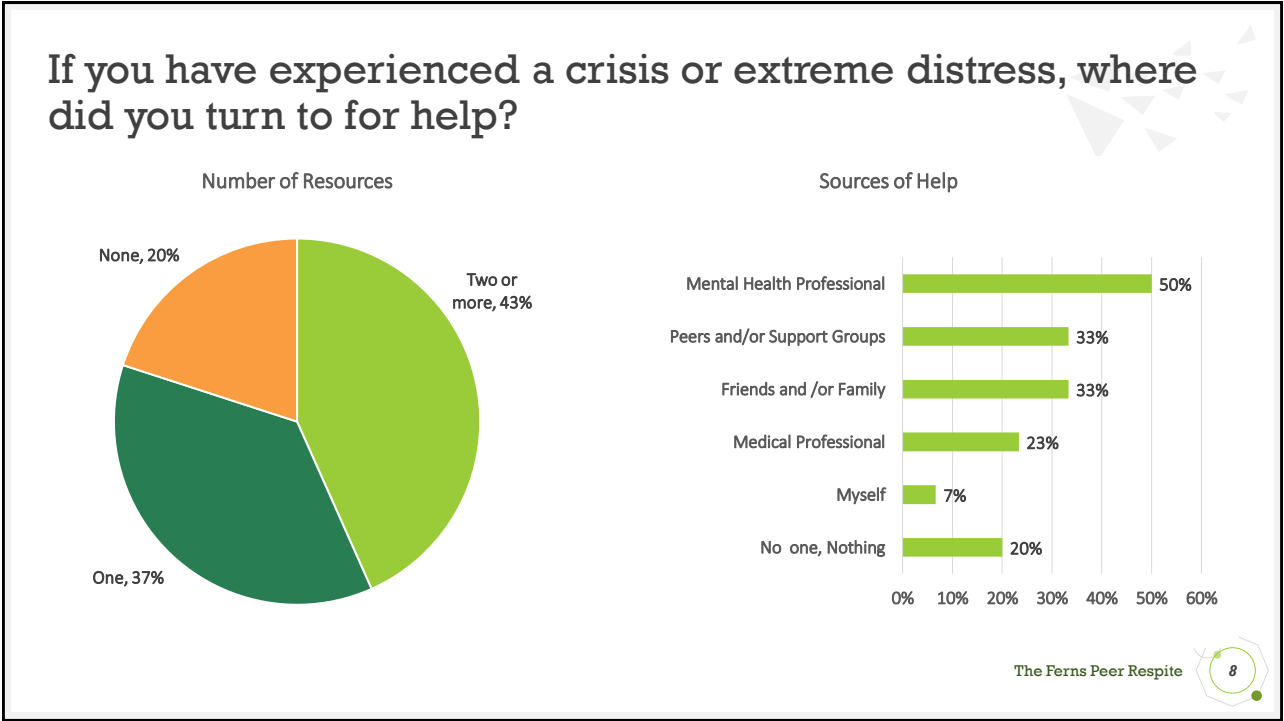
Do you think peer respite would have helped you?

What is your experience with peer support during a period of crisis or extreme distress? Was it helpful, and if so, how? If it was not helpful, how could it have been changed to be helpful?

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What was your experience with those resources?

77% mentioned at least one helpful aspect, and 73% also mentioned one or more aspects which were not helpful.

I was reasonably safe

I was treated like a child who couldn't be trusted

The social workers in the hospitals were helpful

Provided encouragement and listened.

I felt rushed and disrespected.

Ended in arrests & citations

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Do you think peer respite would have helped you?

97% said it would have.

- It would have helped knowing that the person working there understood what it is like to go through a crisis and help me build trust to start my healing process
- To treat people like the adults they are
- To receive help from peers who might better understand my crisis
- Having the ability to get to a safe space where someone compassionate and kind could also be there. Not someone in a doctor's role, but someone who can just be a human, and be a friend.
- Yes, a safe community of support for a few days so I could breathe and calm down and learn and be heard

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What is your experience with peer support during a period of crisis or extreme distress?

63% had experience with peer support during crisis.
95% of those who did found it to be helpful.

“It was very helpful, my Certified Peer Specialist made me feel like I wasn't alone and helped me realize my potential and that people can recover. By sharing their story, it gave me hope for the first time and by supporting me in my goals instead of people doing it for me, made me realize that I had a voice in my recovery, and I was the best expert on myself, for what I needed to heal”

- Survey Participant

What justifies Force?

“Suicide risk increased during the entire admission and post-discharge period, but peaked in the first week of admission and the first week post-discharge”*




*Qin P, Nordentoft M. Suicide Risk in Relation to Psychiatric Hospitalization: Evidence Based on Longitudinal Registers. Arch Gen Psychiatry 2005;62:427–32.

What justifies Force?

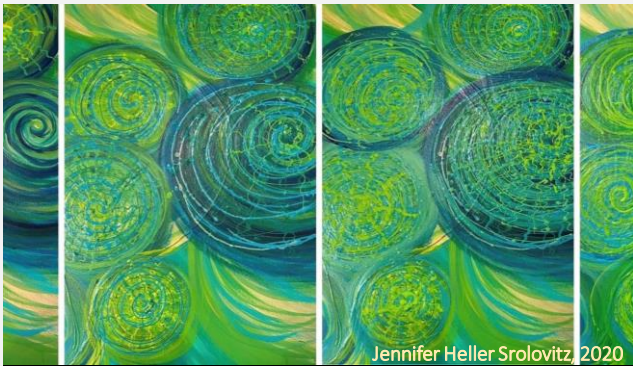
June 2017 Journal of American Medicine Psychiatry reviewed over a 100 studies worldwide and concluded:

“The immediate post-discharge period is a time of marked risk, but rates of suicide remain high for many years after discharge.”



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Jennifer Heller Srolovitz 2020

Transformation

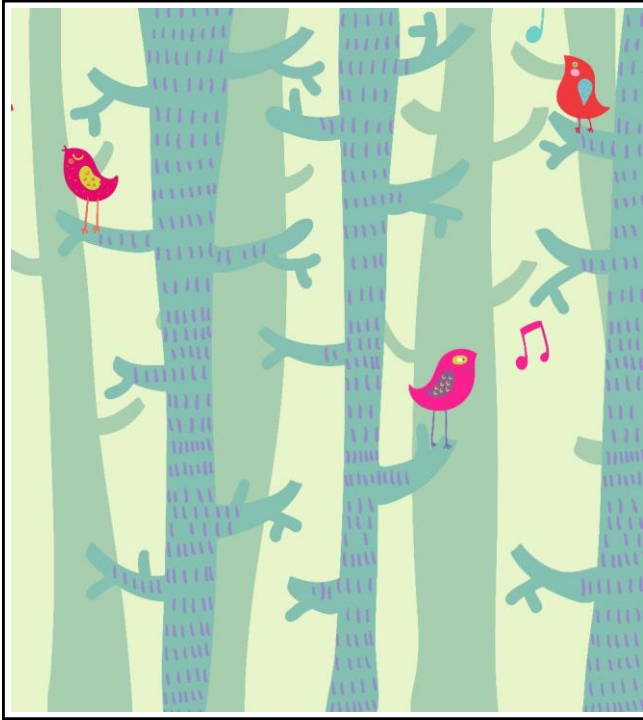
Crisis to Opportunity,
Respite to Retreat

- Expanding conventional thinking about mental health from clinical treatment to include people’s self-determined, meaningful lives
- Viewing distress through the lens of being a common human experience instead of pathology, where individuals find meaning and growth in the experience.
- Nurturing connections and personal agency

Research shows that respite guests report “greater improvements in self-esteem, self-rated mental health symptoms, and social activity functioning,” as well as “statistically significant improvements in healing, empowerment, and satisfaction.”
(Source: <https://www.livelearninc.net/peer-respite>)

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Personal improvements

- Reduction of symptoms (*Greenfield, et al, 2008*)
- Improvements in healing and empowerment (*Dumont & Jones, 2002*)

Satisfaction

- Reported needs met and likeliness to return (*Burns-Lynch & Salzer, 2001*)
- Higher treatment satisfaction (*Burns-Lynch & Salzer, 2001; Dumont & Jones, 2002; Greenfield, et al, 2008*)

Cost Comparison

- Average psychiatric hospitalization cost for respite-users \$1,057 compared to \$3,187 for nonusers (*Dumont & Jones, 2002*)

Use of inpatient and emergency services

- 70% less likely to use inpatient emergency services (*Crad & Isvan, 2015*)
- Days at respite associated with fewer hours of inpatient and emergency services (*Crad & Isvan, 2015; Dumont & Jones, 2002*)

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Human Expertise – Peer Run Respite As Community

Distress is a common human experience; individuals can find meaning and growth in the experience with human to human support

Guests and peer supporters co-create:

- opportunities for connection, respect, mutuality, and **choice**
- grounded in dialogue among “experts by experience”
- nurturing shared awareness, responsibility, and accountability



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Choices – For Ourselves and For Those We Support

I wish there was a peer run respite that I could have utilized. I lived in a residential setting which at times was very stressful and I didn't feel safe. All I needed was a couple days away from what I felt was chaos. When under that amount of stress, my own mental health deteriorated, and I had to go inpatient. The events that led up to me going inpatient were traumatic. It didn't need to get to that point. Being able to go to a peer run respite would have saved myself and others those traumatizing experiences.

I'm an individual with lived experience and have worked as a Peer Specialist for 10 years in multiple different settings, including direct care in the form of mobile services. Many times, peers I supported could have benefited from peer run respite. A peer I supported with a stressful home setting would go inpatient when she was overwhelmed. She just wanted to feel safe. She could have benefitted from a peer run respite since hospitalization doesn't always feel safe anyway.



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Jason Marlack, 2020


Building Other Paths

The Ferns Peer Respite Council and Hopeworx seeks community partners to develop peer driven choices for people in distress, founded on Intentional Peer Support and a belief that people are their own experts

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Build the Path By Walking It




Open Door

Open to all, uprooting re-traumatizing practices



Choice

Options to experience wellness in an environment of choice, to learn from crisis without social separation and hopelessness, and often a devastating disruption to our lives



Inclusion

Each person's experience is honored without coercion or control. And those who use peer respite will be equal partners in design

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Steps Forward – Building our Peer Respite

A local Peer Respite will give guests the option to determine the degree to which they stay connected with their work, school, relationships, creative pursuits, and spiritual practices. We will offer an interactive bridge between guests and existing networks of support, engagement and wellness resources such as art, exercise, yoga, meditation, gardening, and communal activity, and including clinical service providers if guests so desire.

Our initial goal is to host at least 3 adults (ages 18+) at a time, about 150 people per year, from Southeastern Pennsylvania, regardless of ability to pay. We hope to especially impact those for whom the existing mental health system has not worked, their family members, and natural supports, as well as those who have avoided becoming involved with the mental health system. We will help our community to view crisis as part of the human experience, holding space for healing without labeling, pathologizing, criminalizing, or institutionalizing.

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Steps Forward – Building our Peer Respite

Our Council came together because we saw an unmet need, lack of choice and too often help that didn’t help. We are people with lived experience, family members, mental health providers, county HHS staff, faith and non-profit organizations, and interested community members. We will guide this project, communicating and collaborating with public and private entities, including local, state and national peer and mental health recovery organizations, and other Peer-run Respite.

Startup will include identifying a property, more funding, and hiring a Program Manager to recruit, hire, and train a staff of 6-10 peers who have lived experience with psychiatric treatment or who have experienced trauma and/or extreme states. Peers who are “willing to come from a place of their own experience, ... have a real understanding of the losses and distress that traditional interventions can bring, and [are] willing to live and practice the values upon which the respite is founded.” *(Davidow, Sera. Peer Respite Handbook: A Guide to Understanding, Developing and Supporting Peer Respite. Western Mass Recovery Learning community. Denver: Outskirts Press, 2017.)*

Our fiduciary, Hopeworx, a peer-led organization which has successfully offered peer programs since 1994, will provide administrative and technical support.

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Questions

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Next Steps: How You Can Help

- Expect an email from us with information from today, Q&A, including questions we did not get to
- Join on our email list – bit.ly/30nOsQ5
- Volunteer – especially as we get ready to open, work on the house; hands on
- Spread the word – we are wrapping up a video about the Ferns, and will share the link
- Give us feedback about what you would need, what you would be looking for
- Donate
- Continue to learn about Peer Respite at the **International Peer Respite / Soteria Summit: Creating Compassionate Alternatives to Systemic Interventions for People in Crisis and Distress**; register at <https://form.jotform.com/212486035710147>



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Thank You

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<https://www.hopeworxinc.org/what-we-do/ferns-peer-respite/>

