

# Peer support and lived experience in substance use treatment and recovery

CSWE Webinar  
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Providers  
Clinical Support  
System

# Welcome & Introduction



# Objectives

- Define peer support and lived experiences
- Describe the role and utility of peer support in substance use treatment
- Understand how to engage support specialists and individuals with lived experience as part of an interprofessional team
- Understand how to incorporate peer support into social work education

# what is peer support?

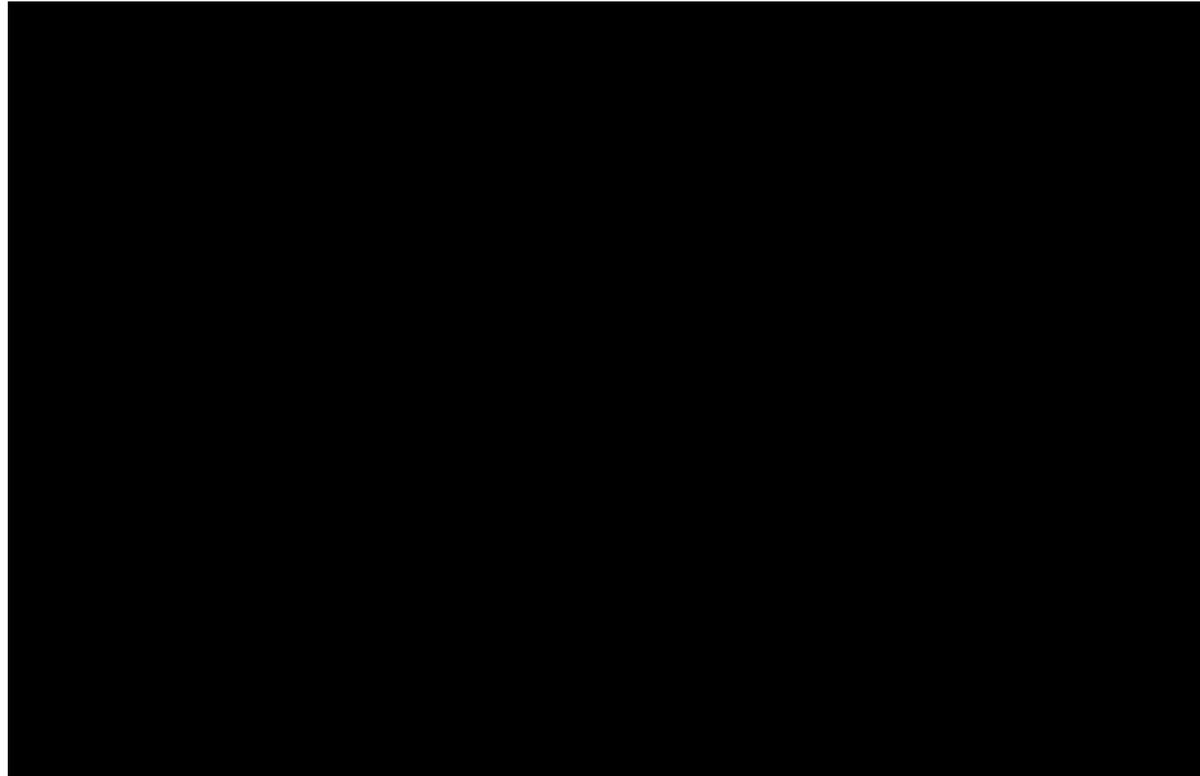


- The giving and receiving non-professional, non-clinical assistance from individuals with lived experience who use it in an intentional way to accompany others on their recovery journey!
- Services that are delivered by individuals who have common life experiences and a unique capacity to help each other based on a shared affiliation and deep understanding of these experiences (SAMHSA 2015).

# “Experts by Experience”

- Use of online supports are increasing
- Access and anonymity decrease fears
- Help build “Recovery Capital” (Identity forming, validation)
- Offer a safe entryway into Recovery
- Provide an opportunity to develop a sense of belonging and identification

# How does it work?



# History of peer supports?

- 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century (pre-medical model)
- Native American (recovery circles)
- Washingtonians (temperance society)
- Drunkard's clubs (1<sup>st</sup> Clubhouse models)
- United Order of ex-boozers
- AA, NA, Wellbriety groups
- "Wounded Healers" Occupational Assistance Programs (pre-EAPs)
- Recovering addicts/paid peer helpers (Recovery Coaches, Recovery Companions)

# How is it helpful?

- Benefit from storytelling, sharing, bearing witness to others' experience
- The therapeutic value of one addict helping another is w/o parallel
- Trust, acceptance & instant identification w/o shame
- Motivate; encourage; celebrate; role model recovery; show that it works!
- Mentor/Ally/confidante
- Foster “healthy attachments and self-empowerment” Decrease isolation

# Bill W & Dr. Bob

- Exhausted all existing treatments
- Found each other w/o looking
- Experienced the “Miracle”
- Had to give it away to keep it

# My Experience!

- No history or exposure to recovery
- Detox workers (first encounter)
- Recovery champions in my life
- Bill & Bob practice (one addict helping another)
- My experience of “giving it away” to keep it!

# The Boston Globe

“In recovery, they all became friends for life...”

- Yvonne Abraham, Boston Globe Article  
July 23, 2016



# Studies demonstrate!

- Improved relationships with providers & social supports
- Increased satisfaction with treatment
- Reduced rates of relapse
- Increased retention in treatment
- Reif, S., Braude, L., Lyman, D. R., Dougherty, R. H., Daniels, A. S., Ghose, S. S., ... & Delphin-Rittmon, M. E. (2014). Peer recovery support for individuals with substance use disorders: Assessing the evidence. *Psychiatric Services*, 65(7), 853-861.

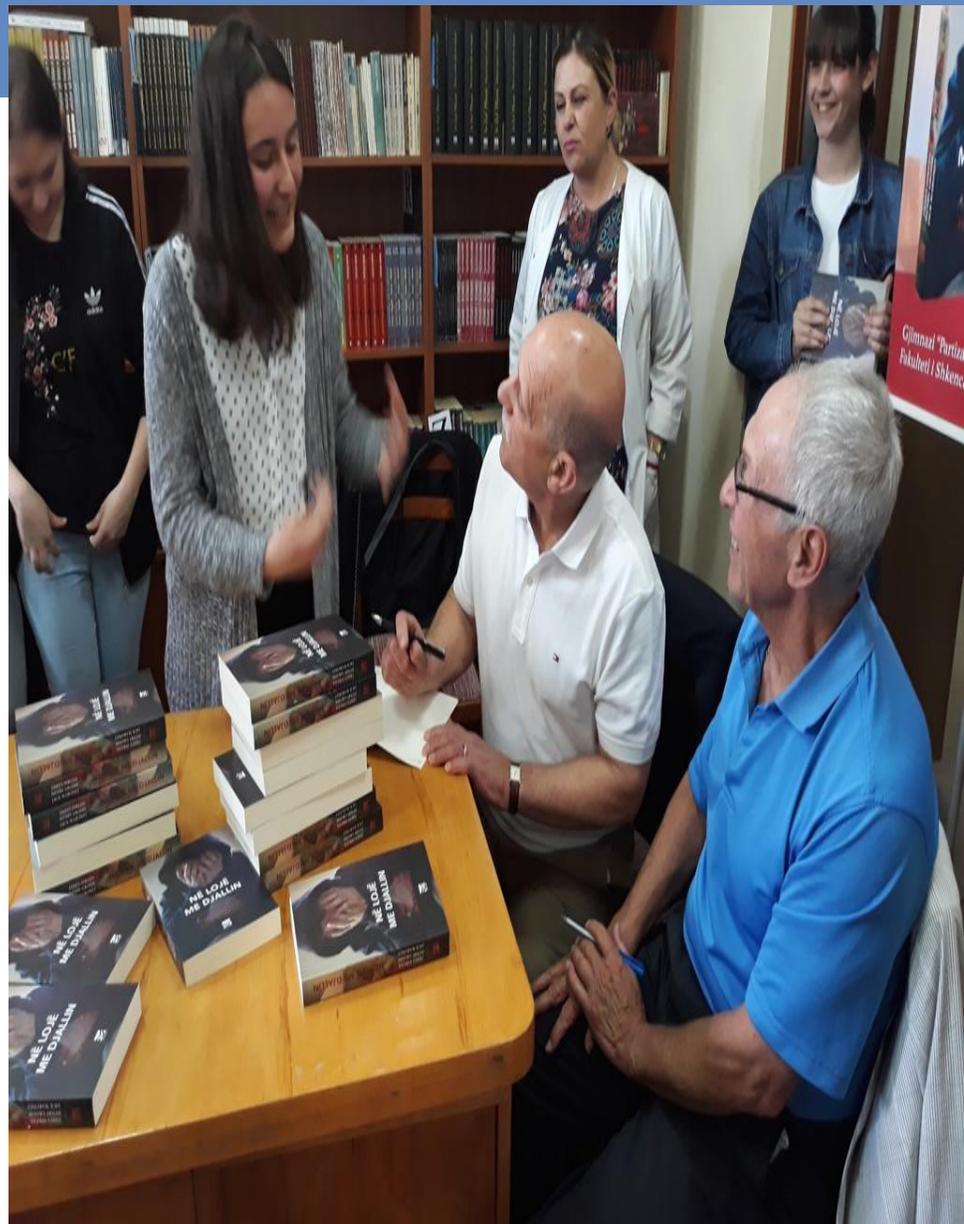
## THE IMPACT OF ROLE MODELS ON OUT OF TREATMENT AFRICAN-AMERICAN ADDICTS:

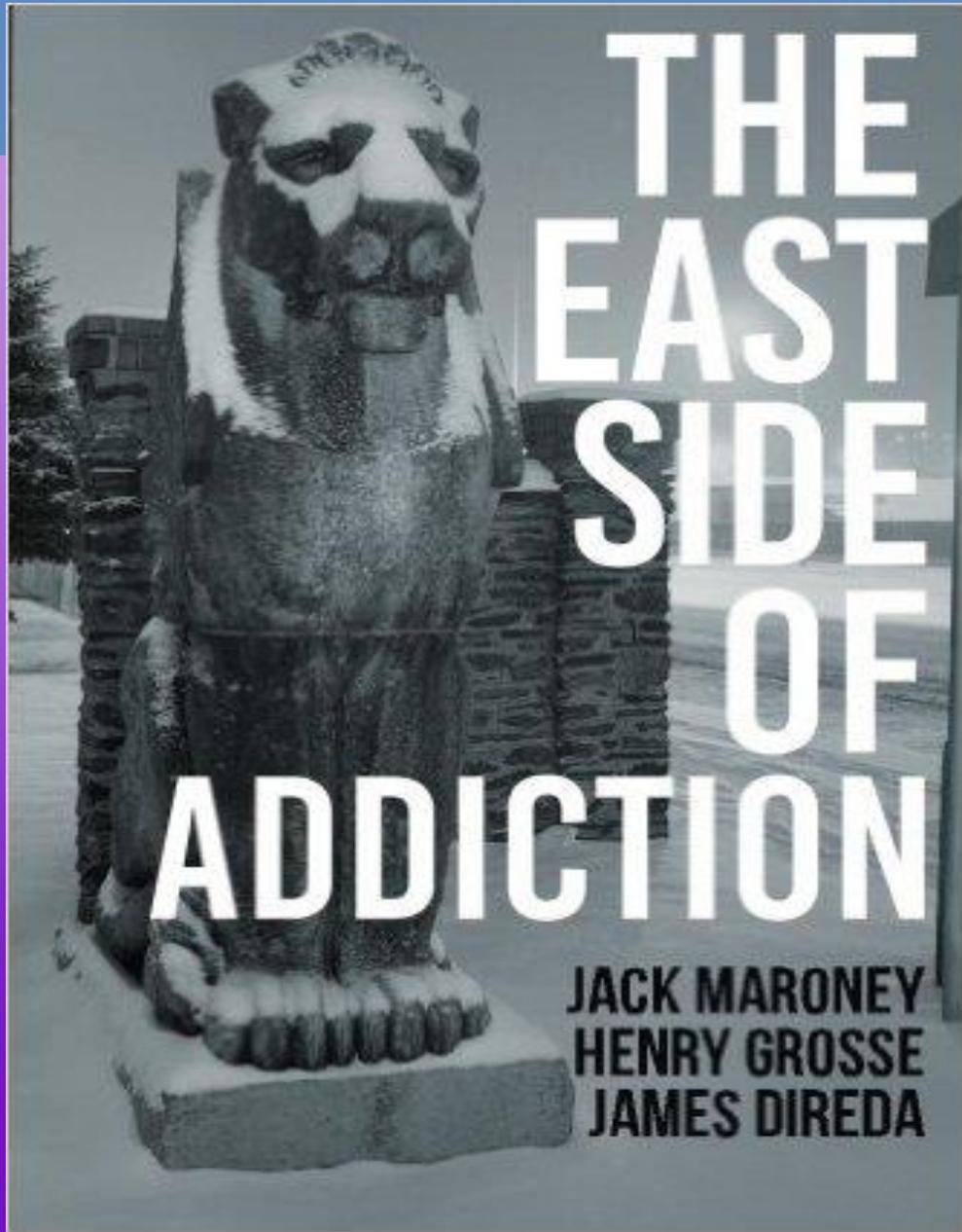
- Nearly all participants described their involvement with recovering addicts as a significant factor in helping motivate them to change
- One of the most powerful motivating factors consistently reported by respondents was the experience of being around individuals they knew from somewhere in their lives, who used to inject drugs and live a similar lifestyle, and now were living a drug-free life as a result of treatment.
- For many respondents seeing someone they knew who had previously been addicted to drugs and had stopped was reported to be a great source of hope and inspiration. It was a positive influence on many respondents' decision to enter drug treatment programs and stop using drugs.

# Incorporating into Tx & SW Ed.

- UMASS Medical (student training) Dr. Borum's Addiction class
- Alumni Groups
- Include in course syllabi
- Invite guest speakers (recovering individual/Recovery Coaches)
- Design class assignments which focus on topic of peer supports, etc.
- Get out there and DO IT.



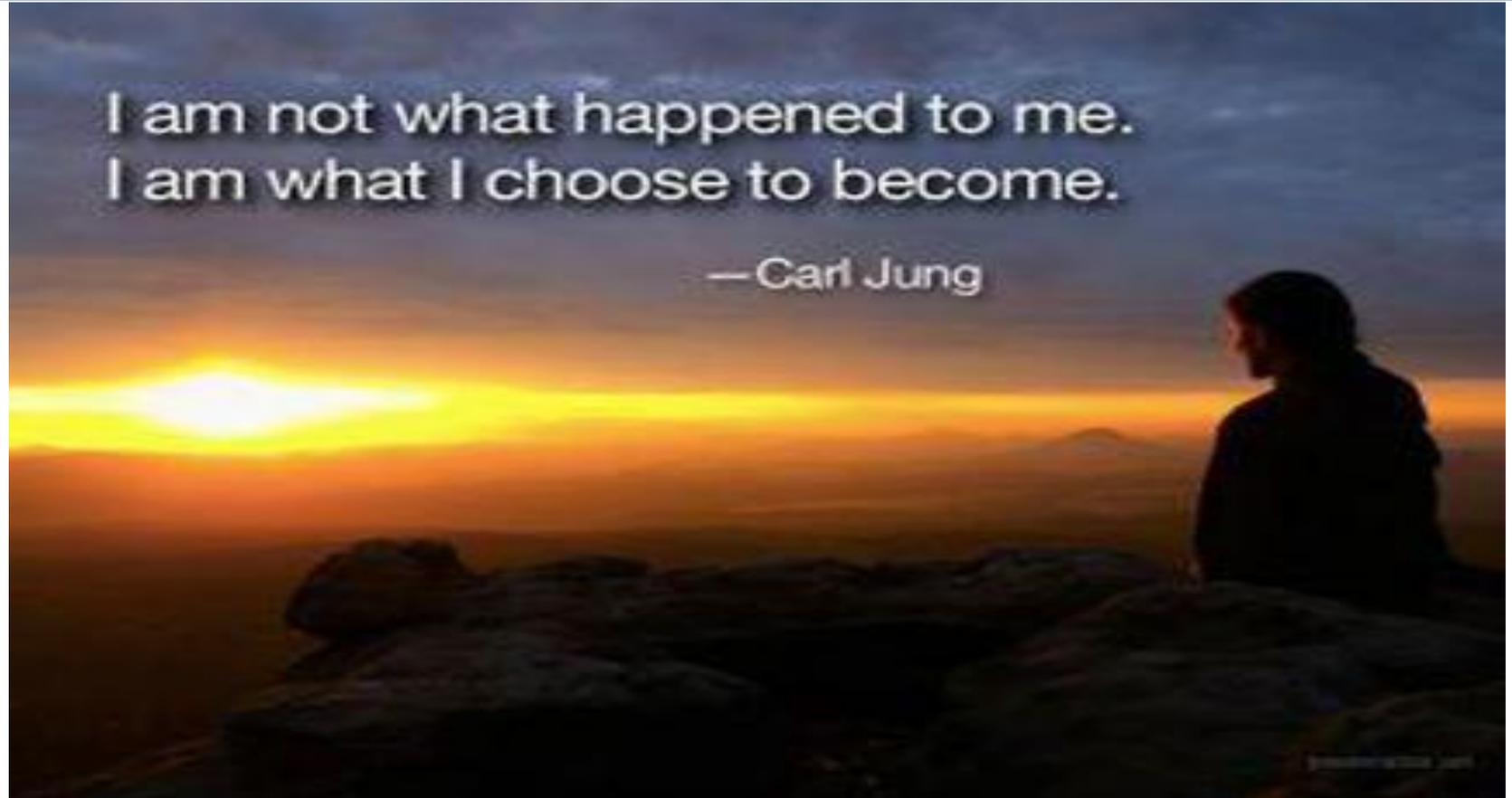






I am not what happened to me.  
I am what I choose to become.

—Carl Jung



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- DiReda, J. The Impact of Role Models on Out of Treatment African-American Addicts: An Inside Perspective, (2014) *European Scientific Journal*, vol. 10, No. 29.  
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- SAMHSA website
- Tracy, K., & Wallace, S. P. (2016). Benefits of peer support groups in the treatment of addiction. *Substance abuse and rehabilitation*, 7, 143.
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