



**SAMHSA-HRSA  
Center for Integrated  
Health Solutions**

## Using a Peer Workforce to Increase Health Literacy

WellSpring Resources  
Alton, Illinois

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
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www.integration.samhsa.gov



## How to ask a question during the webinar



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## About the Speakers: Jennifer Craig



- MA in Counseling Psychology
- MS in Organization & Management
- Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor in Illinois
- Senior Professional in Human Resources
- 20+ years of experience in behavioral health services

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## About the Speakers: Isaac Sandidge



- MA in Gerontology from Eastern Illinois University
- 3 years experience working in behavioral health in residential and community settings
- Leads team of 9 peer service providers
- Facilitates Consumer Advisory Council

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## About the Speakers: Angela Manns



- RN from Lewis and Clark Community College
- 6 years experience working behavioral health in hospital and community settings
- 3 years experience in Substance Abuse
- Manager of Medical Services

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## Health Integration Team

- Nurses
  - Team Leader of Medical Services
  - 2 Nurse Care Coordinators
- Consumer Leadership
  - Coordinator of Consumer Leadership
  - 4 Peer Wellness Coaches
- Wellness and Recovery Team
  - Team Leader of Wellness and Recovery
  - 8 Wellness and Recovery Support Specialists

## Peer Workforce

Diverse population of peer staff employed

- 3 full-time Peer Wellness Coaches (35-40 hrs/week)
- 1 part-time Peer Wellness Coach (16-20 hrs/week)
- Prosumers layered throughout agency

## Coordination is key

- Health literacy begins at intake
  - Consumer is presented with information on disease process
  - Nurse links consumer with appropriate Peer Wellness Coach based on similar shared experiences/primary health concerns
  - Consumer receives medication coaching when needed
  - If warm hand-off, consumer and peer begin to schedule future appointments.
  - Nurse and Peer Wellness Coach consult (Bi-weekly staffings or face-to-face)

## Layered Approach

Increasing health outcomes has been integrated into the culture of the agency throughout all programs.

- Health measures have been built into the comprehensive assessment
- Health education is provided at every appointment
- Trainings and promotion of overall health are encouraged for all teams, including Psychiatry, Outpatient staff, Open Access, etc.

## Integration of Peer Services

- Peer Wellness Coaches are utilized in a variety of cross-functional teams, in an effort to layer health literacy efforts throughout different programs.
- Peers participate in weekly clinical staffings with psychiatric services and adult outpatient staff
- Peers are utilized in bi-weekly Health Integration staffings.
- Peers participate in all residential team meetings and staffings.

## First meeting with Peer

- Expectation of timely outreach by peer staff (72 hrs max).
- Review handouts from Nursing staff
- Discuss peer-facilitated health classes and facilitate class enrollment
- Identify ongoing advocacy and healthcare needs and assist with appointment compliance

## Peer Facilitated Classes

- All Peer Wellness Coaches facilitate several classes, open to all consumers in the PBHCI project
- Classes are typically 1.5 hrs in length and focus on building positive health behaviors

Classes include:

- |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Yoga for You         | 6. Finger-pricking Good |
| 2. Walking and Movement | 7. House of Carbs       |
| 3. Achieving Wellness   | 8. Kick Ash!            |
| 4. Relaxation Station   | 9. Eat Your Heart Out   |
| 5. Scribblez            | 10. Belly-Busters       |
|                         | 11. WRAP                |

## Focus on Training

- Health Integration staff are supplied with regular training opportunities in evidence-based practices and health literacy such as:
 

• WRAP	• Motivational Interviewing
• DBT	• Seeking Safety
• Care-Coordination	• Trauma Informed Care
• Tobacco Cessation	
• Well-body	

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## Ongoing Focus on Health Literacy

Several efforts have been employed to ensure that an ongoing focus on health literacy remains intact:

- Nurses follow up consumers every 3 months minimally
- Nurses ensure that consumers have Dr appointments by following up with the FQHC
- Peers and Nurses follow up with health specialists
- Residential staff provide regular nutrition training and exercise routines
- Chief Medical Officer promotes prevention efforts, diet, and exercise at every appointment

## Glenda's Story...

Glenda came to Wellspring Resources seeking psychiatric help. After enrolling in counseling services, she found out she was diagnosed with Diabetes and was referred to the Health Integration Project (HIP). HIP nurses began working with her immediately, teaching her how to tell if her sugar levels were too high and how to use insulin. Since being in the program, her relationships have improved, and she is able to spend more time with her friends and kids.

## Takeaways

1. Focus on Training – Peers, like any other staff, can be a valuable asset when equipped with proper training and clinical supervision.
2. Coordination – Layer peer staff throughout different teams and/or programs
3. Communication

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## For More Information & Resources

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e-mail [integration@thenationalcouncil.org](mailto:integration@thenationalcouncil.org)



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