

We have something to teach too!

THE VALUE OF SERVICE USERS AS EDUCATORS  
IN SHAPING THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

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As we gather together here today, we acknowledge this sacred land on which the Holiday Inn operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory.

We are also mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.



**What Do You Want To Learn?**

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Teachable moments and why we learn
- Connecting recovery principles and values to this work
- Service Users as Educators – why we teach
- The Teacher/Learner relationship
- Benefits and challenges of doing this important work
- Support – its importance for both Teacher and Learner
- Service Users as Educators - Initiatives



# TEACHABLE MOMENTS AND WHY WE LEARN

- Pair up sitting facing one another, open, with eye contact
- Recall and share a moment where you had an unexpected encounter the impact of which changed the way you see yourself and/or the world around you
  - Who was the teacher – how well did you know them?
  - What was the context (private or public/one-on-one/group) AND what was your mood?
  - What was the learning/lesson?

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To be a teacher in the right sense is to  
be a learner.

*Soren Kierkegaard*

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“ Learning is finding out what you already know.  
Doing is demonstrating that you know it.  
Teaching is reminding others that they know  
just as well as you. You are all learners, doers,  
and teachers. ”

*Richard Bach*



# CONNECTING RECOVERY PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

- Recognize and respect the diversity of recovery journeys.
- Describe the impact of natural and peer supports, advocacy, employment, housing, prejudice, discrimination, poverty and social exclusion on recovery.
- Critically examine the extent to which the current culture and practice of mental health and addiction services supports or hinders hope, dignity, empowerment, choice and positive risk-taking.



# SERVICE USERS AS EDUCATORS

- Who am I to teach?! ... Who am I not to?!
- What we know has immense value!
- We have unique knowledge, skills and strengths resulting from our lived experience
- Our lived experience shared with learners – has the power to reach across differences to foster critical reflection and change the way services are delivered

# THE TEACHER/LEARNER RELATIONSHIP

- This is a mutual learning opportunity
- Being Intentional - modeling the behavior (respect) you want to see
- Understanding and valuing the learner's worldview
- Finding our common/shared humanness
- The value of listening
- Creating the space for critical reflection to consolidate learning

# THE BENEFITS OF DOING THIS WORK

- Owning, honing and building our strengths
- Sharing our collective stories to facilitate learning
- Creating the space for critical reflection
- Witnessing growth and understanding
- Community of support
- Contributing to systematic change

# THE CHALLENGES OF DOING THIS WORK

- Triggers, learner resistance, feeling able to contribute
- Support and Compensation
- Where in a formal curriculum do we introduce this work
- Expanding the need for this work with physicians working in other specialties who encounter people with mental health challenges
- Expanding to Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, and Registered Nurses, Others...



# SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHER

- Create or join a Community of Practice
- Monthly Supervision Meetings
- Debriefing or sharing with colleagues
- Self-reflection

# SUPPORT FOR THE LEARNER

- Making the Case for Peer Support & Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support – *MHCC*
- 2016 Guidelines for Recovery Oriented Practice – *MHCC*
- 100 Ways to Support Recovery — *Mike Slade*
- Peer Specialists are Not Clinicians – *Pat Deegan*
- What do Peer Support Workers do? A job Description – *Nora Jacobson, Lucy Trojanowski and Carolyn Dewa*
- Wellness supports for residents within the U of T Dept. of Psychiatry
- Self-Reflection

# SERVICE USERS AS EDUCATORS INITIATIVES

Seed Projects (funding provided by a CAMH AFP Innovation Award):

- SUE (Service User Education) Training 2.0
- From Surviving to Advising
- CAMH Education – Educational Safety Training
- Medical Psychiatry Alliance Collaborative Care Certificate Program
- U of T Psychiatry Residency Selection (CaRMS)
- McMaster School of Social Work

**REFLECTION:  
WHAT DID YOU LEARN TODAY?  
ANY SURPRISES?**



QUESTIONS?

**THANK YOU!**

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