

Our Priority: Peer Support Expansion in Spokane County

Spokane County has some of the highest child abuse, domestic violence, and youth suicide and self-harm rates in Washington State. As a result, the reduction of family trauma and violence was identified as a priority for Spokane County in 2019, and COVID-19 has only exasperated these issues. After extensive research and a community mapping process in partnership with the Spokane Regional Health District, Priority Spokane and our 25 member organizations identified Peer Support as a proven best practice to help prevent and address family trauma and violence in our region. Peer Support is also a valuable tool to address COVID related stress and trauma while providing needed community supports.

We are expanding the use of Peer Support in Spokane County to:

1. Prevent family trauma and violence by modeling and encouraging healthy coping, communication, and relationship skills.
2. Improve outreach to and engagement of underserved and marginalized communities.
3. Enhance the quality and equity of current services by implementing peer perspective, voice, and choice.
4. Reduce suicide rates (those who utilize peer support experience 36% less suicide attempts than those who do not).
5. Provide meaningful employment and support to individuals more likely to experience joblessness (formerly incarcerated, institutionalized, homeless, disabled, etc.)
6. Reduce hospitalization rates and the associated costs. Those who utilize peer support experience 2.9 fewer hospitalizations compared to those who do not.
7. Reduce costs of traditional care. Peer Support is shown to produce a cost savings of \$5.58 for every dollar spent.
8. Address stress and trauma related to COVID 19 through virtual peer led COVID Stress & Trauma trainings.

We are doing this by:

1. Expanding equitable access to peer support trainings for individuals.
2. Expanding access to peer support implementation trainings and technical assistance for organizations.
3. Providing a support network for current and future peer support professionals.
4. Providing funding and support for the creation of new peer support positions.
5. Increasing the sustainability of peer support through the creation of a Spokane County peer support coalition.
6. Increasing awareness and visibility around the value of peer support.



PEER SUPPORT

What is Peer Support? Peer support is a best practice that occurs when people with lived experience are trained and equipped to provide connections, knowledge, experience, emotional, social, or practical support to others facing similar obstacles. Peer Supporters have their own professional role in the behavioral health field with their own values, ethics, and practices.

For more information visit www.PrioritySpokane.org or e-mail PrioritySpokane@outlook.com

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