

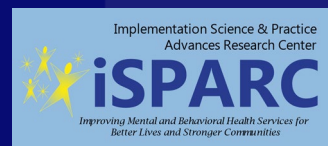


TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTHCARE: HOW TO GROW THE YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT PEER SUPPORT WORKFORCE

Webinar for UMass Chan Medical School
Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research
Oct 20, 2022

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WHO WE ARE & WHAT BROUGHT US TOGETHER

- Antonia Barba
- Michelle Munson
- Vanessa Klodnick



Bridging the Gap ABOUT GET SUPPORT CONTACT US

The Best Support Comes Without Judgment.


Living in an unsafe and unstable home environment. Being bullied about who you are. Feeling overwhelmed and not knowing what to do about it. Faced with making decisions about your next step in life.

Bridging the Gap supports teens and young adults who have experienced physical and emotional challenges like these, and more. We are here to support you with respect and without any judgment.

We provide confidential one-on-one support, job training, skills building, and social activities to help you create a path to health and wellness on your own terms. We partner with other programs around the city to make sure you're connected to all the resources you need. And we're staffed by mentors who have been through, and overcame, experiences similar to yours.

We hope you'll reach out to learn more – there's no pressure, no labels, and no cost. Just support.

Email us at bridgingthegap@jbfcs.org and a member of our team will get in touch. You can also follow us on Instagram at [@BridgingTheGapNYC](https://www.instagram.com/BridgingTheGapNYC).



BRIDGING THE GAP ABOUT GET SUPPORT HERE FOR YOU

DISCLAIMER

Many paths, we are **ALL** needed:

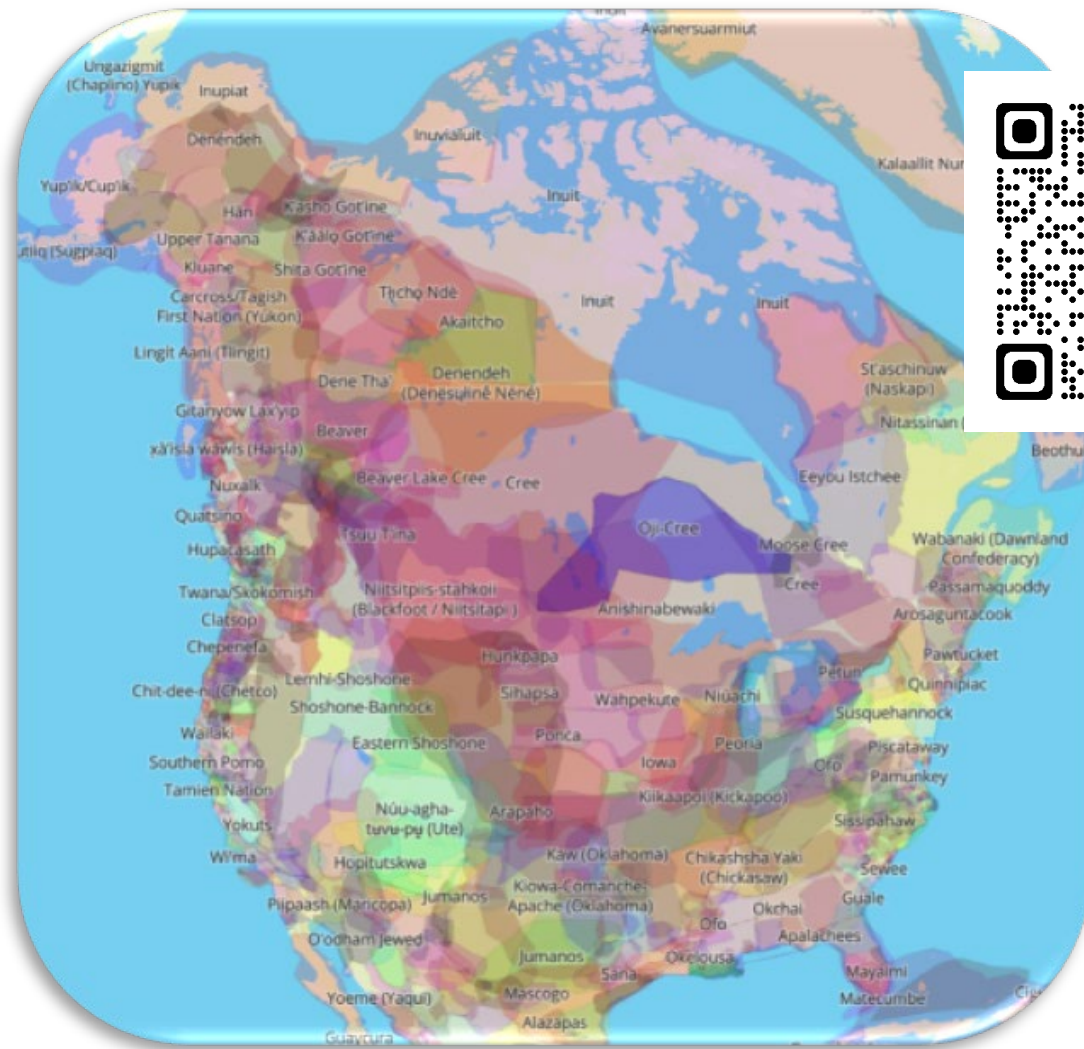
We're not here to tell people that they're doing youth/young adult peer support right/wrong, **we're here to share** our perspectives in leading youth & young adult program development & implementation.

Observations & Tools:

We're going to share our **observations + tools** we've built to address some of the challenges that youth/young adult peers face in community mental health settings. We will also share what has worked well.



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Native-Land.ca | Our home on native land

Illinois:

- Kaskaskia
- Kiikaapoi (Kickapoo)
- Meskwaki
- Myaamia
- Niuchi
- Očhéthi Šakówiŋ
- Osage
- Peoria
- Potawatomi
- Sauk

Massachusetts:

- Agawam
- Eastern Nehantick
- Massachusetts
- Massacoies
- Moehegan
- Mohican
- Nahaganset
- Naumkeag
- Nauset

New York:

- Abenaki
- Canarsie
- Cayuga
- Delaware
- Erie
- Erie
- Laurentians
- Lekawe (Rockaway)
- Lenapehoking
- Massapeguas

- Nimpuc
- Nonotuck
- Paugussett
- Pawtucket
- Pequonnock
- Pequot
- Pocumtuc
- Podunks
- Pokanoket

- Matinecock
- Merrick
- Metoac
- Mohawk
- Mohican
- Munsee Lenape
- Nissaquogue
- Oneida
- Onondaga
- Poospatuck
- Schaghticoke
- Secatogue
- Seneca
- Setalcott
- Unkechaug
- Wappinger

- Quinnipiac
- Saukigo
- Tunxis
- Wampanoag
- Western Nahantick
- Wompanoag

Texas:

- Alabama-Coushatta
- Anadarko
- Apache
- Arapaho
- Biloxi
- Caddo
- Cherokee
- Cheyenne
- Chickasaw
- Coahuiletecan
- Comanche
- Delaware
- Hainai
- Jumano
- Karankawa
- Kichai
- Kiowa
- Kickapoo
- Pakana Muskogee
- Potawatomi
- Shawnee
- Tawakoni
- Tiqua
- Tonkawa
- Waco
- Wichita

OBJECTIVES

HISTORY

Describe history of youth & young adult peer support & key principles drawing from child peer mentoring and adult peer support models.

TENSIONS

Identify critical elements of youth & young adult peer support & their tension(s) with current community mental health settings.

BEST-PRACTICE

Discuss emerging best practices for supporting and growing the youth & young adult peer workforce.



WHAT IS YOUTH/YOUNG ADULT PEER SUPPORT?

Young Person

- Struggling in multiple domains
- Establishing identity, not necessarily keen on integrating “mental illness”
- Feeling misunderstood
- Feeling out of place
- Wealth of strengths that often go unnoticed



Adult Provider Professional

- Well-intentioned
- Trained to treat mental health symptoms within ‘the system’
- Embedded hierarchy
- Feels like has been there, but often really hasn’t

ADULT MENTAL

HEALTH



NEAR-AGE

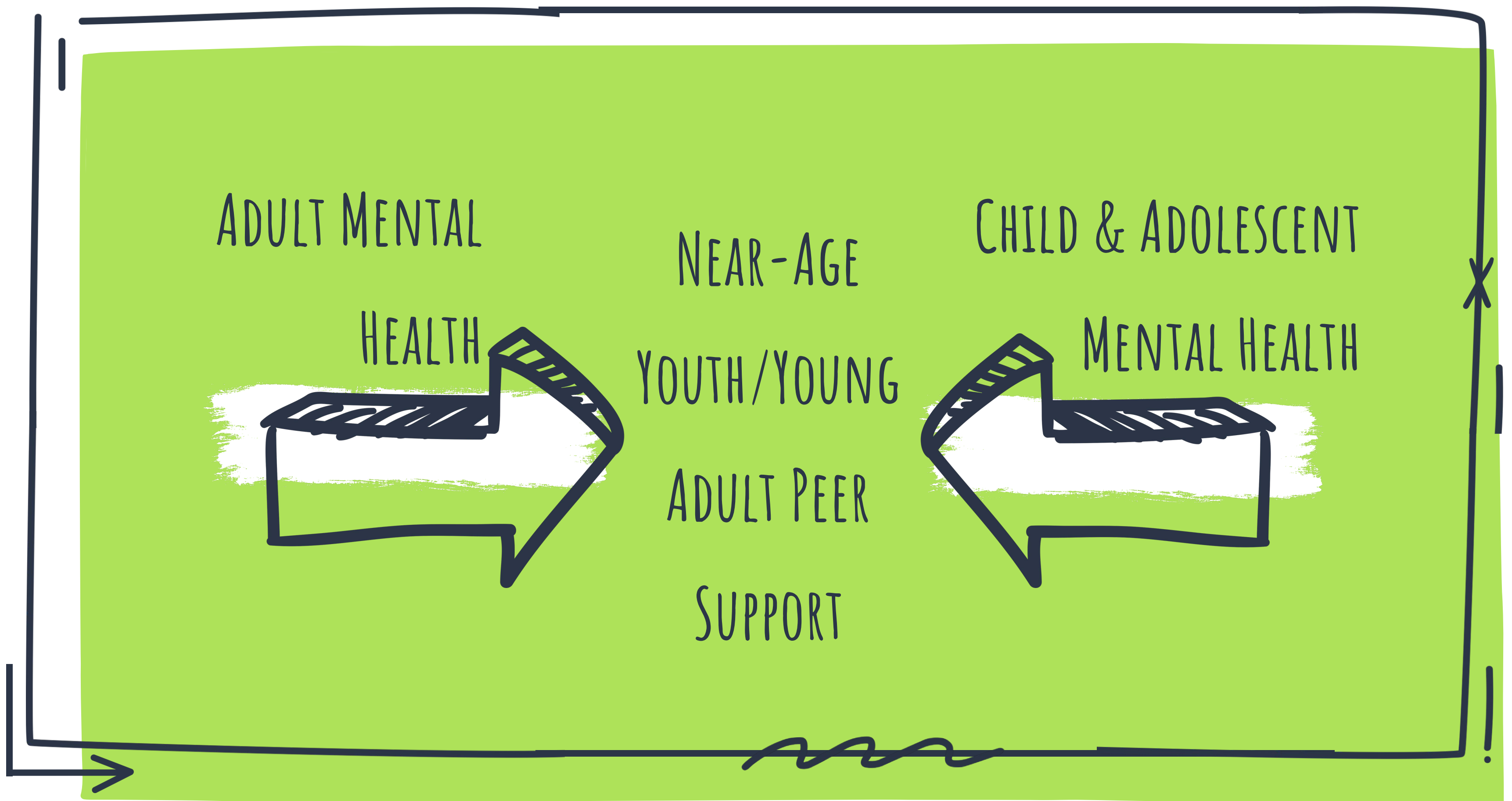
YOUTH/YOUNG

ADULT PEER

SUPPORT

CHILD & ADOLESCENT

MENTAL HEALTH



PEER PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES

These are present within & across peer roles in child & adult settings

- Mutuality through co-creation, co-caring, co-sharing, co-collaboration, & co-healing
- Respect & shared responsibility for healing & wellness
- Connection, belonging, & community
- Mentoring, guidance, role modeling, & navigation
- Strategic use of self & authenticity
- “Nothing about us without us”
- Deep self-knowledge & growth through self-reflection





Youth Peers provide a unique invaluable perspective & support through which young people often feel more connected, less alone, more willing to open up & try new skills with someone who is not in a position of power over them but who walks alongside them & supports their self-determination & goals.

Young Adult Peer Mentoring — Children's Behavioral Health
Knowledge Center (cbhknowledge.center)



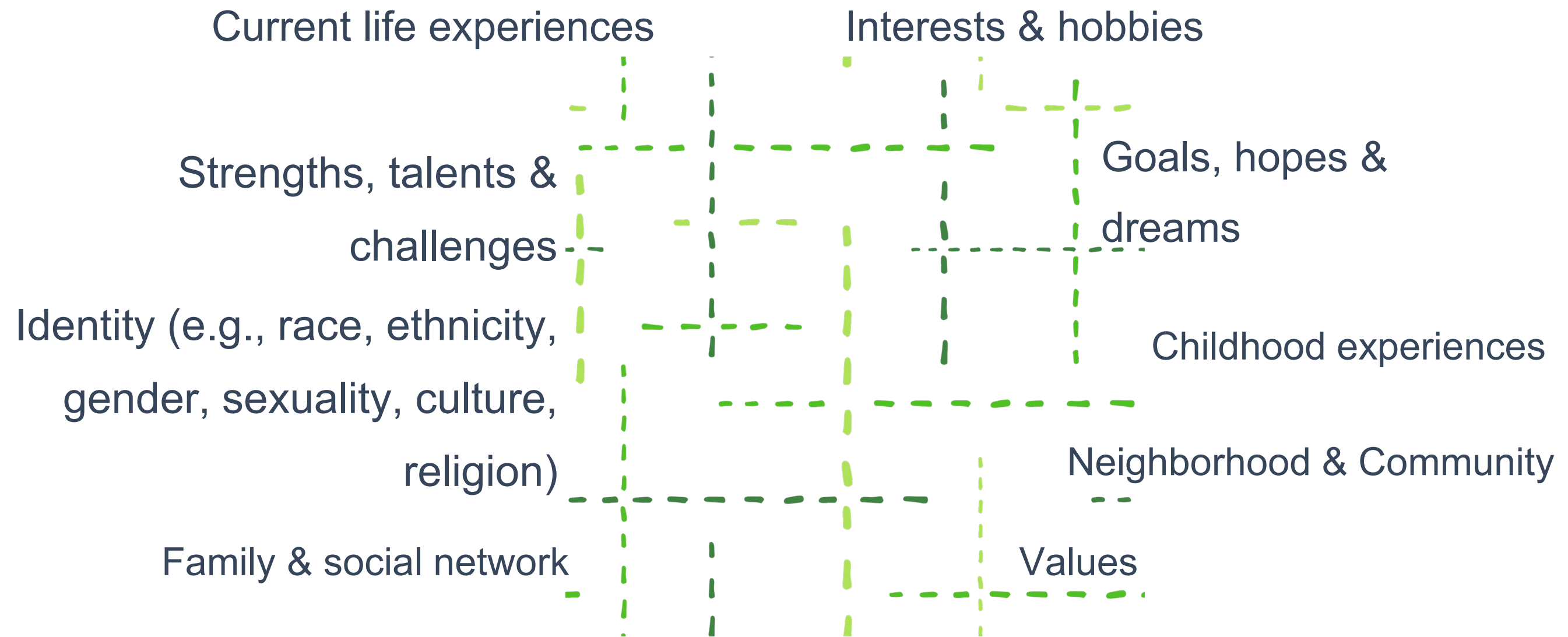


LIVED + LIVING EXPERIENCE

“I may not have been in your shoes, but I’ve been to the same shoe store RECENTLY.”

"PEERNESS" IS MUCH MORE THAN LIVED/LIVING EXPERIENCE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS.

Mutual Relatability: Peer providers must be relatable & willing to relate.



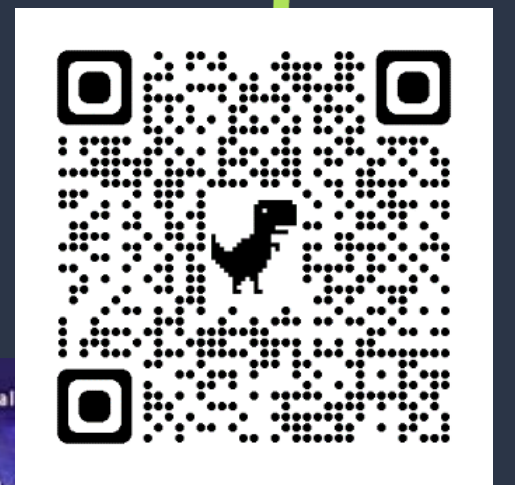
(RE)DEFINING/THINKING ROLE OF EXPERT

Peers are experts.

I didn't study:

I've lived/am living:

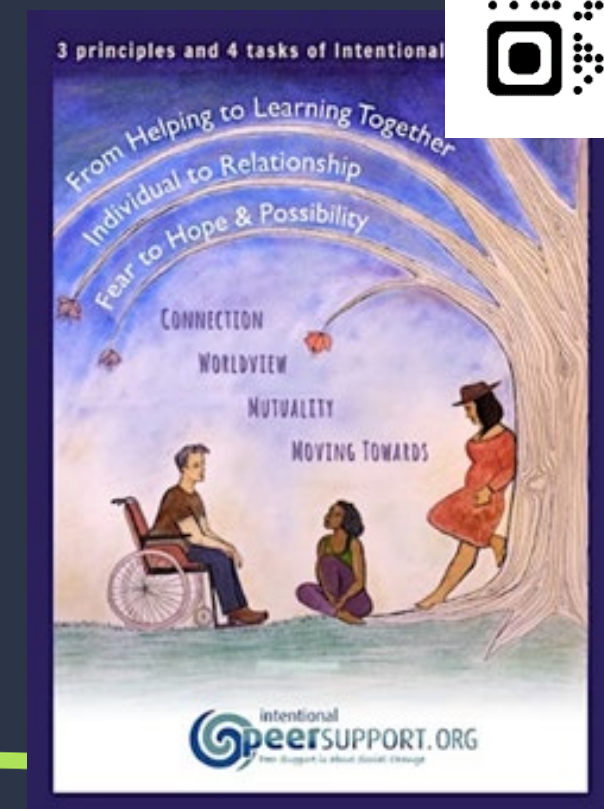
- Peers in “expert” role must navigate hierarchy rooted in the medical model (1 helper/expert & 1 help seeker/non-expert)
- All actions are goal-oriented & must be documented in relation to medical necessity



Peer Support is Social Change.

“Being together for the purpose of being known. It is the sharing of responsibility and effort so we can enjoy the experience of being part of something bigger than ourselves. Moving toward is being together for the purpose of being fulfilled.”

[Intentional Peer Support]



NEAR-AGE YOUTH PEERS ROLE IS 2-FOLD

Supporter.

Individual peer support to young people



Disrupter.

Influence team, program, agency & community



- Must be clear about these expectations in hiring process
- Must provide support, including training, supervision (individual & group), & ongoing professional development
- Org must be willing to change



TENSION: PROFESSIONALIZATION OF PEER ROLES

Billable Service

Certification process

Evidence-based practice

Mutual informal support

Shared power

Advocacy & Change



Regulated



Unregulated

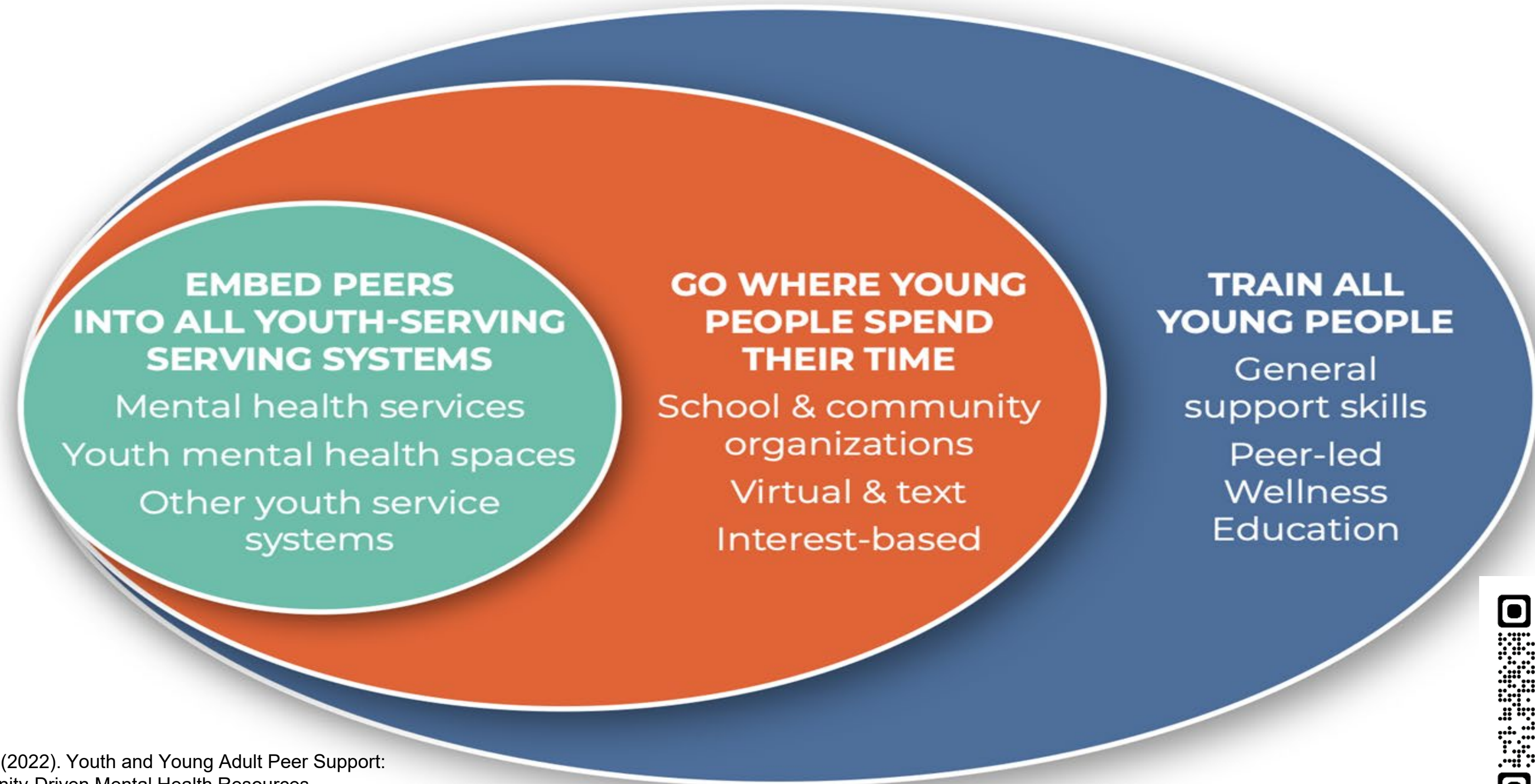
Formal paid support provider to identified "help seeker"

Peer is expert/has power

Historically grew from mutual validation of inhumane treatment



A Comprehensive Approach to Youth Peer Support





← CONTINUUM OF SAFELY SHARING MEANS... →

BALANCING:

Authentic

Strategic

Real
Stigma

Expectations
to "Share"

What feels
right/wrong
in moment



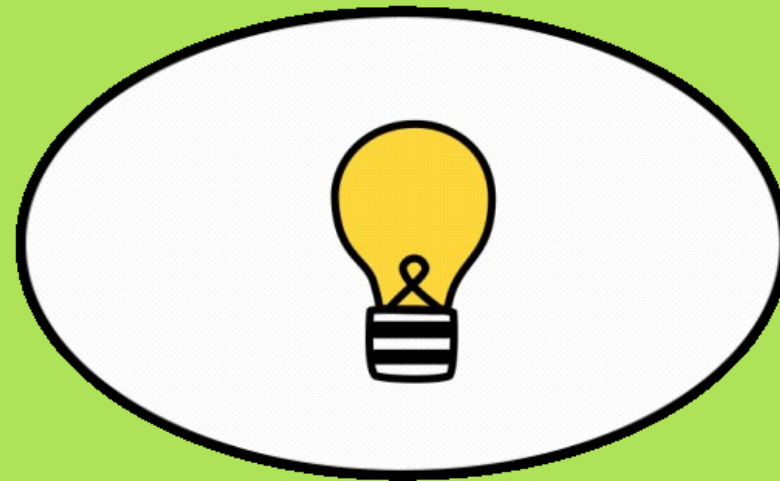
PEERS ARE OFTEN SUBJECT TO ABLEISM, AGEISM, & RACISM

- ① Young, often first professional job.
- ② Mental health living experience & real instability of transitioning to adulthood.
- ③ If agency hires relatable peers to their clients, they're likely also individuals who identify as racial & ethnic minorities + may have experienced complex trauma, poverty, housing instability, system involvement, etc.

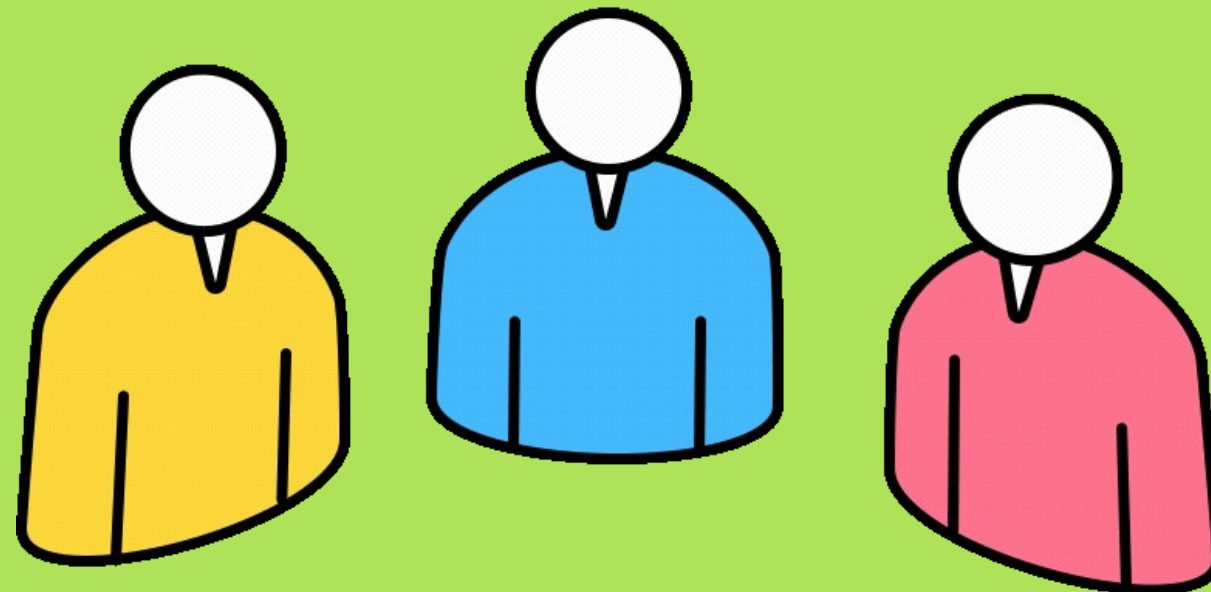
LET'S INTEGRATE YOUTH PEERS.

LET'S CREATE A YOUNG ADULT PEER MENTOR PROGRAM.

This is a grant is a great opportunity to develop new services and programming. Peers will be able to reach our clients in a whole new way!



This is so needed! Focus on engaging our most vulnerable teen & YA clients. Partner with and support the programs experiencing significant challenges.



Program
Under
Construction



Program
Under
Construction



Could someone from your team tell their story of struggle for 200 of our closest board members & donors???



We're sorry, we can't increase wages for your staff unless they have a degree.



Can you provide a detailed rationale for why you are supervising this way?



Why aren't you meeting your deliverables? Find a way to make it work!

**Multiprong
Supervision &
Support**

**Amending Job
Titles**

**Improve
organizational
readiness**

**Ongoing
professional
development
for supervisors**

**Mutual support
& learning
spaces**











Value
living
expertise

Peers
are vital!

Young Adult Peer Mentoring Organizational Self-Assessment & Capacity Building Toolkit



Version 1, Updated January 2021

Created by Children's Behavioral Health Knowledge Center
Massachusetts Department of Mental Health
Intended for use by state and non-profit agencies.

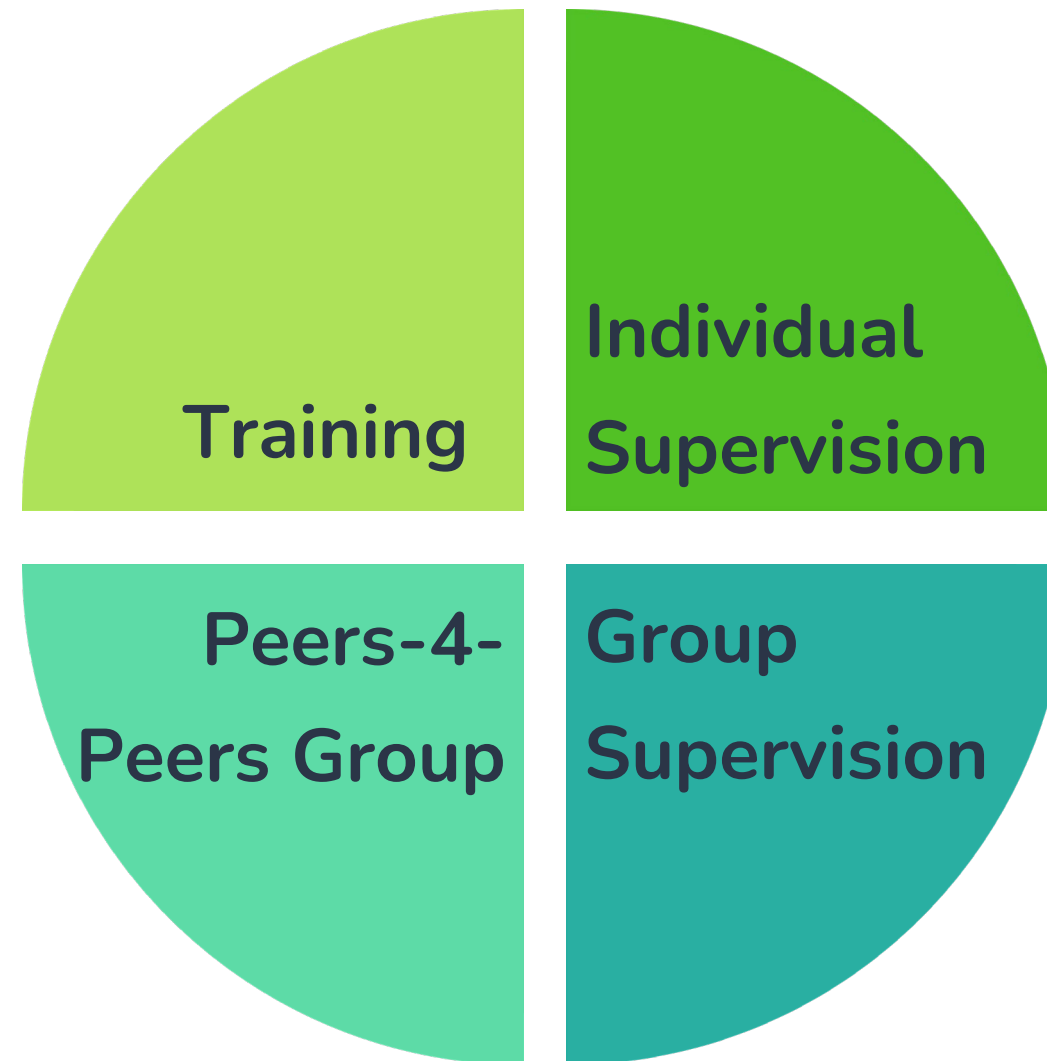
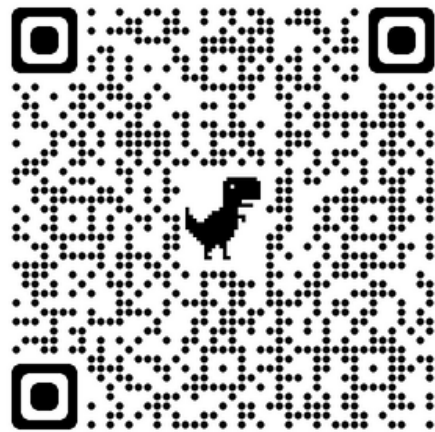


- **Organizational commitment, plan, & implementation facilitation** necessary for successful youth peer integration.
- **Prepare collateral providers + programs** to understand peer role, activities & contribution.
- **Leverage the YAPM Media Library** — Children's Behavioral Health Knowledge Center (cbhknowledge.center)

[Young Adult Peer Mentoring
Organizational Self-Assessment &
Capacity Building Toolkit](#)
(squarespace.com)



MODEL FOR THRIVING YOUNG ADULT PEER SUPPORT PROVIDERS



PROFESSIONAL & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Creating spaces for processing/validation/emotional support
+ learning/sharing resources/growing for:

- #1 most requested support from youth/young adult peers
- Beneficial to have for peers & a separate space for supervisors of peers.
- Ideally facilitated; at least monthly; could be virtual
- Must have resources + dedicated sponsor time



RE-DEFINE "PEER."

VALUE "BRING YOUR FULL SELF TO THE WORK."

BE WHO YOU ARE. KNOW YOURSELF.

CALLING ALL TEAM MEMBERS.

I am learning
who I am.

I matter.

I am unique.

I belong.

My mental health
condition is 1 part of me.



DISCLOSURE: INCREASING SAFETY / SUPPORT



Crux of taking the job:

“You’re a stigmatized identity.”

Strive for in program/org:

1. Peers do not have to disclose ‘on demand’
2. Helps organizations value mutuality & sharing in all roles - not just peer roles



Increasing safety/support:

1. Job Titles & Clarity of Role (i.e., BTG)
1. Model and Support Strategic Sharing (manage organizations expectations)

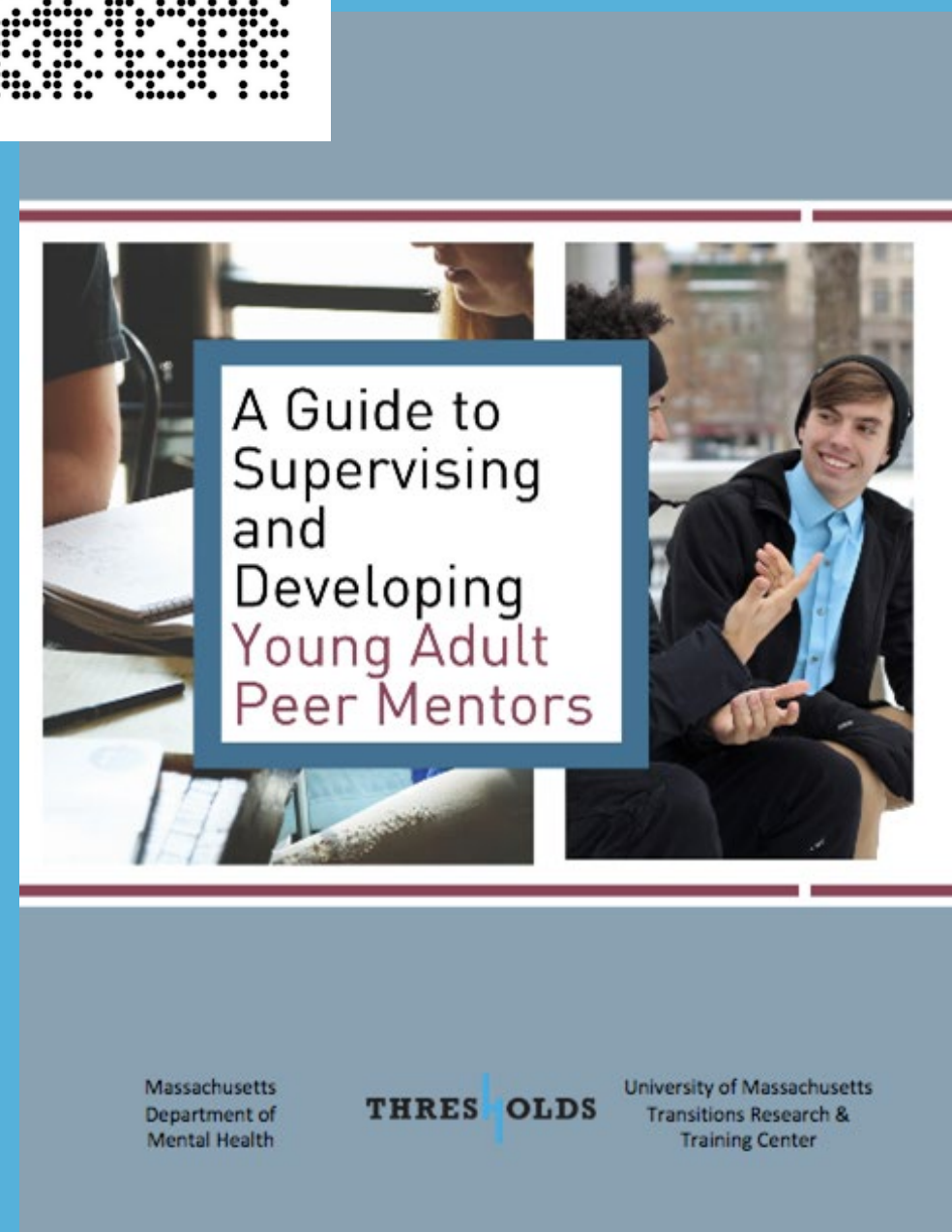
ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS ON WELLNESS FOR ALL

Promote wellness plans in place for all staff. Make wellness part of supervision & agency culture (e.g., CEO talks about wellness plan)

Recognize REAL Problematic Narratives:

- Must share living experience (as opposed to solely lived) + expectations to “be well” all of the time (in high burnout healthcare settings).
- Asked to share about mental health & related struggles, but not supported (or worse...shamed, reprimanded, etc.) when mental health struggles arise





SUPERVISORS NEED TRAINING, SUPPORT, & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

- Most supervisors do not have experience in peer roles.
- Importance of modeling strategic sharing, wellness, advocacy & navigating sticky situations + facilitating hard conversations, addressing conflict, discrimination, & abuse between non-peer colleagues & peers.
- Mentoring, coaching & modeling must be supported, understood or endorsed by agency



Changemaker - Stories from people making a difference (changemakerpodcast.com)

You are part of a movement to redefine how mental health agencies meet young people's needs.

TAKE ACTION



- Reflect on today's webinar. What is something that you can integrate into your practice or program?
- What might get in the way of that? (b/c that's where you start.)
- Who are allies in your org that you would need to involve to support a thriving peer workforce?

THOUGHTS? QUESTIONS? WANT TO LEARN MORE?

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THANK
YOU