



## **PRN Initiatives:**

### **Trauma Informed Peer Support**

*Trauma Informed Peer Support:* PRN's peer support team is available virtually through one-on-one relationships for people that live in Mecklenburg County. No time limits, no insurance is required, no assessments needed, you can self-refer and it's free!

*Peer-Run Warmline:* PRN's Warm-Line is a 24/7 peer staffed phone line to offer confidential emotional support, problem solve and share resources. Call any time, any day and from anywhere at (833) 390-7728.

*MeckHOPE Cares Initiative:* MeckHope is a collaborative initiative to bring urgent and preventive mental health and drug/alcohol-related services to Mecklenburg County residents during the time of COVID-19. PRN is partnering with Anuvia, Mental Health Association of Central Carolinas, Smith Family Wellness, Thompson Child and Family Focus, Cardinal Innovations, and Mecklenburg County to bring various local resources and services to ensure access during this time. PRN's Warm-Line serves as a portal of entry for all MeckHOPE resources.

*Mecklenburg County Collaborative:* PRN in collaboration with Mecklenburg County, partner agencies, and grassroots organizations are working together to find housing, employment, and supports as well as resources including, but not limited to; MH/SA supports, Peer Support Services (PRN), Community Health Work (PRN), etc. in a comprehensive approach to address all the social determinants of health for those who were formally at "tent city" and has since been located at hotels within the community. PRN's role is to provide individual Peer Support according to each person's specific needs, Community Health workers who are there to help navigate resources within the community to ensure overall well-being and connection to the services needed.

### **Recovery Education**

*Virtual Recovery Hub:* PRN offers over 95 virtual classes, support groups, and activities each month spanning the 8 Dimensions of Wellness. Open access and no referral needed. Whether you are interested in African Dance, substance use recovery, building your financial knowledge, writing for wellness, racial equity, parenting during COVID, healing from trauma, or to hear what's happening at PRN, we have classes for everyone. Join us to connect with a recovery and healing community!

### **Criminal Justice**

*Wellness, Recovery and FIRST Courts (i.e. 5 Treatment Courts-Diversion):* PRN's peer support team that have been personally involved in the justice system due to emotional distress, mental health and/or substance use, are embedded into all legal and clinical staffing's to introduce alternatives to incarceration, sanctioning, and traditional treatments. PRN court teams support people that are court involved to not simply satisfy court requirements, but to re-imagine long term recovery and healing. PRN also provides training on peer support, trauma, culture, recovery, 8 dimensions of wellness, etc., to treatment court teams, DA's, probation, parole, treatment providers, and judges.

*Criminal Justice System:* Like the Wellness and Recovery court team, PRN's peer support team that have been personally involved in the justice system due to emotional distress, mental health and/or substance use, are embedded into the community to introduce alternatives to incarceration, sanctioning, and traditional treatments. PRN CJS initiative team supports people that are at high risk for CJS involvement, or currently involved with one or more intercepts on the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM). Our goal is to support people to re-imagine long term recovery and healing.

## **Supported Employment**

*Individual Placement and Support:* One of the most direct pathways to recovery is through employment and education. Disability benefits equate to poverty, which often results in little access to healthcare, safe neighborhoods to live, and opportunities to build a life that feels personally fulfilling and meaningful. IPS is an approach to employment and education that supports upward mobility, exploration of your skills and interests, and supports your career aspirations. Whether you desire support to figure out what you want and do not want to do, finding employment, keeping, and even leaving a job to go to another one, we may be able to assist you! IPS is a fidelity-based model and it works!

## **Housing Support**

PRN's team of peer supporters that have experienced homelessness in Charlotte offer street outreach, support people with Shelter Plus Care (SPC) subsidies and are co-located in the men and women's shelter. PRN's team offers peer support, tenancy support and employment supports to help people without homes to choose, get, maintain a home and move toward homeownership. We do this by offering emotional support, access and connection to community resources, mentoring and skill development.

*Shelter Plus Care:* For individuals that have a SPC subsidy and are uninsured, PRN offers the "Plus Care" component with supports to identify landlords that will accept the subsidy, in their preferred community, with supports to choose their home, move in, keep their house, build their financial knowledge, and move from subsidized housing to their own home. Access to this program is through a referral from Shelter Plus Care.

*Men and Women's Shelters:* Along with Mecklenburg County, the Roof Above, Anuvia, and Women's Center of Hope, PRN offers peer support, tenancy support and employment supports to people that are currently at one of the community shelters, are experiencing emotional distress, mental health and/or substance use challenges, and are in need of a variety of resources to move out of the shelter into a home. PRN provides peer support from Peer Specialists who have experienced homelessness and have personally navigated community shelters and housing resources resulting in securing their own home and advancing their own recovery. The role of the Peer Support Specialists in this initiative is similar to the roles within the SPC program. Shelter programs provide referrals for this initiative.

## **Integrated Care**

For individuals that have a SPC subsidy and are uninsured, PRN offers the "Plus Care" component with supports to identify landlords that will accept the subsidy, in their preferred community, with supports to choose their home, move in, keep their house, build their financial knowledge, and move from subsidized housing to their own home. Access to this program is through a referral from Shelter Plus Care.

## **Innovations in Peer-Run Alternatives**

*PRN Incubator:* PRN's Founder and CEO knows the difficulties that accompany the start-up of a survivor-led organization or projects, and we support emerging leaders of people with lived experience through administrative

support, shared health insurance, mentoring and or fiduciary support for grants and contracts. Incubator organizations are carefully selected to ensure that their leaders have shared recovery values and a belief in creating non-traditional, survivor-led options in our state.

### **PRN's current Incubator projects are:**

*Emerald High School of Excellence:* The Emerald School of Excellence (ESE) is NC's first Recovery High School, located in Charlotte. ESE is a unique school as it offers students that are experiencing substance use challenges with the ability to receive peer support integrated with recovery supports, while pursuing their education in a highly tailored school. Recovery High School's around the country demonstrate that post substance use treatment, students that return to a traditional school have a 30% continued recovery, while those that go to a Recovery High school have a 70% continued recovery rate.

*Peer-Run Wellness Centers:* NCDHHS, in support of capacity building for peer-run organizations, has contracted with PRN to serve as an incubator for two new Peer-Run Wellness Centers, GreenTree in Winston-Salem and No Wrong Door in western NC. PRN will work with the leadership of both organizations to build capacity for operations, program development, and sustainability. Modeled after PRN's Recovery Hub, the PRWC model utilizes the fidelity to the FACIT.

### **Training, Technical Assistance and Consultation**

PRN offers a variety of training, TA and consultation to organizations, MCO's, communities, hospitals and governments on topics related to trauma, peer support, recovery, alternatives to confinement, supported employment, culture, etc.

*Peer Academy:* Peer Academy is PRN's 40-hour NC approved curricula to train future Peer Support Specialists and prepare them to understand and operate in their role with authenticity to the history of the C/S/X movement and values related to mutuality. Elective classes are offered through Peer Academy as well for continuing education.

*Trauma Informed Organizational Change:* With much focus on the role of trauma in emotional distress and labels of mental illness and substance use challenges, service providers and systems are challenged to create organizational cultures, environments, services, processes and procedures that recognize the impact of trauma, foster resilience and resist unintentional re-traumatization of people supported. As a trauma-informed organization that also spent 2 years immersed in trauma-informed organizational change, PRN's CEO offers training, TA and support to cohorts of executive leaders and managers considering trauma-informed organizational change.

*Recovery University:* Understanding recovery practices, principles, research, tools and the history of the recovery movement is critical to fostering recovery in practice. Recovery University uses a combination of didactic and experiential content for the development of recovery practices for individual practitioners or teams.

*Supported Employment/Individualized Placement and Support (IPS):* When offered with fidelity, IPS demonstrates that highest rates of competitive employment. PRN started NC's first technical assistance centers for IPS SE and operates a high fidelity IPS team. Whether you are interested in learning about the model and what makes it unique or want your team trained in IPS, we're here to support your organization to embrace competitive employment as among the most effective paths to recovery!

*Peer Support Supervisory Training:* Ideally, programs that employ Peer Support Specialists are supervised by peer supervisors. However, many programs utilize non-peer supervisors with little exposure to the role/scope/competencies of authentic peer support, integrating PSS into the workforce, supervising the roles within their scope of practice, and how to interview, employ and retain a high-quality PSS team. Through PRN's 16 years of experience operating programs staffed by Peer Support Specialists, our team has a lot of "lessons learned" and have translated that into trainings, learning collaboratives and technical assistance for supervisors, teams and/or organizations. Is your agency "ready" to effectively offer peer support? Are you offering peer support but not sure if you're doing it well? Let us know how we can help!

*Housing First and Community Support Team (CST):* In partnership with UNC Center for Excellence in Community Mental Health, we offer a 3-day virtual training to meet the NC requirement for CST. The training includes a Recovery foundation, principles of Housing First and supportive housing, tenancy support, an overview of subsidies and the use of various tools to support people to find, choose, get, and keep a home after experiencing homelessness.

### **Policy, Advocacy, and Social Justice**

*Community Crisis Response Team:* In partnership with Safe Justice for NC and Policy Analyst, Jarrod James, PRN has designed a non-police alternative model that blends community organizing, national examples from CAHOOTS (Oregon) and STAR (Denver), peer support, and recovery-alternatives to police intervention, use of involuntary commitment, confinement, segregation, restraint, and forced or coercive treatments. This team is driven by local community members that are committed to racial equity, safe communities, compassion, and humane alternatives with people experiencing emotional distress (see attached recommendations).





*Peer Voice NC (PVNC):* PRN received a 3-year federal SAMHSA grant to incubate a statewide peer-led effort to mobilize people with lived mental health and/or substance use recovery to impact legislation, policy, system and practice change. PVNC utilizes coalitions to elevate the influence of peer and recovery leaders and to build infrastructure needed for a strong peer and recovery movement.

### **Current PVNC Coalitions:**

- 1) Peer Justice Initiative (PJI)- formerly incarcerated Peer Support Specialists are organizing to create a NC specialty credential for forensic peer support, change policies to ensure that forensic peer supporters are utilized in all 5 intercepts of the criminal justice system from diversion to re-entry, and criminal justice reform efforts.
- 2) Recovery Alternative to Forced Treatment (RAFT)- people that have experienced involuntary and coercive treatment, allies and family members, have gathered 10 years of IVC data from 100 counties, demonstrating an 80% increase in the use of IVC in NC. The RAFT Coalition is advocating for alternatives to confinement and forced treatment through an array of peer-led community options.
- 3) PSS Expert Commission- peer support is effective if done with integrity and authenticity. NC does not currently have a certification, rather a certificate process, leading to lack of oversight of the profession. Leaders with lived experience and peer support joined with partners from NCDHHS, providers, and BHS Springboard to author recommendations for a peer-led board to provide oversight, credentialing and de-credentialing of the peer support profession including the draft of a NC statute.
- 4) Peer Support Coalition- this coalition established a White Paper and formal recommendations to align NC with best practices in peer support.
- 5) I'm IN Community Inclusion- a stakeholder coalition is established to advance the importance, funding, and policy related to inclusion as a critical ingredient to recovery. PVNC created the #MY5NC campaign to increase connection and reduce isolation during COVID.
- 6) PIPBHC Integrated Care- TA and training is being provided to 4 pilot sites in NC to establish integrated care settings, incorporating specialty peer support into the model. "Lunch and learns" and learning collaboratives are provided for workforce development and supervisory skills of non-peer supervisors.
- 7) Peer Wellness Center Pilot- this PVNC coalition established a model for Peer Wellness Centers to be piloted in NC with a defined model, outcomes, and fidelity.

