

## Peer Support Specialist Times

*"Recovery and healing happen in relationship."* - PSL for the 21st Century

### Independence Is Often Born Out of Interdependence

By Chris W. Martin



On the 4th of July, **we celebrated Independence Day** which commemorates the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776 by 13 unique colonies. Did you know that what brought about our Independence Day is similar to what happens in recovery and resilience services? **It takes a collaboration of diverse people coming together to support a miraculous and united outcome.**

One of the founding fathers and the second president of the United States, John Adams, noted this team-like synergy in his 1818 letter to Hezekiah Niles, editor of the Baltimore-based national weekly news magazine, Weekly Register when he wrote:

*"The Colonies had grown up under Constitutions of Government, So different, there was so great a Variety of Religions, they were composed of So many different Nations, their Customs, Manners and Habits had So little resemblance, and their Intercourse had been so rare and their Knowledge of each other So imperfect, that to unite them in the Same Principles in Theory and the Same System of Action was certainly a very difficult Enterprize. The compleat Accomplishment of it, in So Short a time and by Such Simple means, was perhaps a Singular Example in the History of Mankind. Thirteen Clocks were made to Strike together; a perfection of Mechanism which no Artist had ever before effected."*<sup>1</sup>.

As that other great 20th Century founder and imagineer, Walt Disney said, **"Many hands and hearts and minds generally contribute to anyone's notable achievements."** So to all the recovery and resilience service teams out there, Happy Independence and Interdependence Day!

1. Retrieved from <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-6854> on June 27, 2024.

### Inside

#### Page 2

The Four P's of  
Accountability  
- Theresa Sorensen

#### Page 3

Finding Courage—Facing  
our Dragons  
- Chris Martin

#### Page 4

CRRS Update

#### Page 5

Recovery Practices for  
Leaders Bootcamp



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By Theresa Sorensen



Have you ever thought about how **modeling accountability can become a sacred gift**, bringing hope to the people we serve as well as our teams? As Peer Support Specialists, **accountability means being reliable, consistent and transparent in our actions and interactions**. It means honoring the trust that people place in us and upholding our ethical standards.

Many years ago, when I was working in my first role in behavioral health, an interaction with a woman made an impression on me. In the middle of a discussion with her, I was called away to help a co-worker. I told her, "I'll be right back." After a few minutes I returned, and she exclaimed with a smile, "You're back!" When I reminded her that I told her I'd return and asked her why she was surprised, she said, "I'm used to people not doing what they say they're going to do." This provided an indelible lesson for me about the power of accountability and how much positivity it can bring to the people we serve.

**When we model accountability, we empower others to take ownership in their part of the recovery relationship with us as well as for their own well-being.** This, in turn, provides a wellspring of hope. Our commitment in this way contributes to the effectiveness of the healing power of the Peer Support relationship. As we continue to model this accountability, it also becomes a cornerstone in the relationship with our teammates, fostering a recovery culture at work. What a gift!

I like to think of the Four P's as the sacred gift of accountability:

**Protecting the Peer Support Relationship** – accountability demonstrates commitment, loyalty and love.

**Providing a Positive Example** – Accountability can inspire others to "rise up" for themselves and others.

**Positioning the Power with Others** – Accountability is a way to empower others and empowering them translates into hope.

**Promoting a Recovery Culture** – When we model accountability, we create a standard of care in our recovery services.



So, thank you for the accountability you show every day. As Peer Support Specialists who practice ethical standards in all we do, it's important to highlight our Peer Support DNA competency of accountability and also to realize that **even when we show up in small ways, it can have a big impact.** And just to close with a few more "P's," **we give a priceless gift when accountability is present in our practice as Peer Support Specialists!**

# Finding Courage—Facing Our Dragons

By Chris Martin



In the Middle Ages, knights held their shield in one hand and a sword in the other so they could use their knees and feet to guide their horses. According to legends, one battle that could make the knights' knees weak and their toes curl was when they faced a dragon. If the dragon were fire breathing,

then the armor did little good; it could heat up the armor like a can of knightly soup. Maybe that is one reason why we associate dragons with fear. **When we face fear, we can feel our knees go weak, our feet ready to flee, and our faces flush with heat.** Just like the legendary knights, however, we can still slay the “dragons” in our lives.

Dr. Susan Jeffers wrote an amazing little book called, Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway.<sup>2</sup> **She defined fear as: “a feeling of agitation and anxiety caused by the presence or imminence of danger - a dread that one’s safety is in jeopardy.”** And in her book, she listed the following three levels of fear with the third level being the most intense:

**Level One:** These fears are the surface story and are situation oriented. Two types of Level One fears are:

- A.) Fears that happen (such as aging, change, being alone, retirement, making friends, etc.)
- B.) Fears requiring action (such as going to work, going to college, making decisions, etc.)

**Level Two:** Fears that involve inner states of mind rather than external situations – ego related. (such as fear of rejection, fear of success, fear of failure, fear of being vulnerable, etc.)

**Level Three:** The core of all fears; the biggest fear of all – the one that keeps people stuck is: falsely believing... “I can’t handle it.”<sup>2</sup>

According to Dr. Jeffers, we’re always going to face fear as long as we desire to grow in our recovery, resilience, and wellness. **In order to conquer our fears, we merely need to develop trust in ourselves that we can handle the dragons coming our way.** The secret is to feel the fear (regardless of whether it’s a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd level one), and do it anyway. As Jeffers says in her book, **“Pushing through fear is less frightening than living with the underlying fear that comes from a feeling of helplessness.”**<sup>2</sup> So it’s time, my knightly friends, to slay that dastardly dragon of fear in our lives. And here’s a dragon slaying poem to get us started.



## Slaying the Dragon

I used to hide and procrastinate from facing my awful dragon.

I told myself “Go last; you wait,” but I knew my dreams were laggin.

I felt the fear and took a breath, so please don’t think I’m braggin.

I learned to feel and push through fear as a way to slay my dragon.<sup>1</sup>

1. Martin, C.W. Next 40 days to a resilient journey of meaning and purpose. 2020 Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc.

2. Jeffers, S. (2007). Feel the fear and do it anyway. Vermilion.



On this two-year anniversary of peer support specialist certification going live in the State of California, Crestwood RRS is proud of our major contributions to enhance the State's behavioral health workforce needs by training, supporting, placing and helping to certify Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists (CMPSS). **To date, CRRS has supported more than 150 individuals in successfully completing their State Certification and who now officially hold the CMPSS certification.** We heartily congratulate every one of you professionals and we remain excited about the work you all do to support people on their recovery journey! We look forward to each of you continuing to share your successes with us so that we can celebrate in community alongside you!

In addition to completing two full cohorts in June for the **Peer Support Learning for the 21st Century** (an approved 80-hour Medi-Cal PSS certification training), we have another cohort that will be completed in early July, along with two full cohorts starting in July, that will complete in early August.

We are also currently facilitating a 40-hour CMPSS specialization course for Parents, Caregivers, and Family Member Peers (**Supporting Family Resilience**), with our intent to schedule additional specialization courses in the very near term. And our work continues to support the professional development needs of CMPSS through our soon-to-be regularly scheduled course for **Recovery Practices in Ethics and Law** (6 hours, meets CMPSS re-certification requirements).

Additionally, we also recognize the importance of enhancing the Recovery Culture across the State. To that end, we are facilitating our second scheduled **Recovery Practices for Leaders Bootcamp**, July 29-31 in San Diego at our Peer Employment Learning Center. While much of our Recovery Practices curricula are facilitated through specific county contracts, the **Recovery Practices for Leaders Bootcamp** is available to anyone who wants to gain a new focus on their Recovery Leadership skills. To learn more about the July Bootcamp, *Recovery Practices for Leaders*, *Recovery Practices for Organizations*, and/or the *Resilient Culture Playbook*, please contact us for interest and details.

All the best wishes to you and your loved ones!

- **Jim Ritchie, CRRS Director of Operations**

## Viva la Evolution!

### A podcast on Growth, Resilience, and Transformation

- ◆ Promote the recovery process with individuals and teams.
- ◆ Shift your organization's culture to a recovery focus that builds resilience
- ◆ Listen to interviews with important leaders in the recovery field and hear from people who are in recovery and how they got there.
- ◆ Discover unique ways peer support specialists can support your team and enhance recovery service outcomes.

**Join The Conversation!**





## Re-imagining Recovery Service Leadership for the 21st Century

**Tuition: \$1,500 per person**, or \$1,200 per person for agencies that register three or more people.

Join us in the near future for a fun, exciting, and engaging action packed three-day professional recovery leadership development workshop in beautiful San Diego, CA. Crestwood's Recovery Resilience Solutions Team ensures you will:

**Restore, re-energize, and re-ignite** the passion for your work as a recovery service leader.

**Gain** certification as a Resilient Culture Playbook Coach.

**Receive** confidential/ anonymous feedback from your direct reporting staff on your recovery leadership skills.

**17 Continuing Education (CE) units** authorized by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and Board of Registered Nursing (BRN)

- Pre-workshop assignment to customize your learning experience
- Post-workshop technical support at 30, 60 and 90 days

**Contact Us to Register**

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**209.313.4511**

**[RecoveryResilienceSolutions.com](http://RecoveryResilienceSolutions.com)**

**When: July 29 - 31 | 8:30AM - 5:00PM**

**Where: The Peer Employment Learning Center at 4085 Colts Way, San Diego, CA 92115**



*Inaugural Recovery Practices for Leaders Bootcamp training. San Diego, CA. March, 2024*

### What our Bootcamp leaders have to say:

“Thank you! An unexpected, informative fun, and a new start opened my perception of how to be a leader.”

“Classroom learning is hard for me. It is difficult for me to sit in one spot for too long or maintain focus. I was dreading an 8-hour classroom day for this reason. My expectations were far exceeded. The class was engaging and actually fun. It was not just information dumping which will help me retain more of it.”

“Wonderful leadership workshop and amazing insights.”

“Amazing workshop, and great team-building, I learned an abundant amount of knowledge to bring back to my own facility.”

“One of the most informative trainings I've been to. Great work you guys.”