



Peer Support Specialist Times

“Recovery and healing happen in relationship.” - PSL for the 21st Century

Inside our Peer Support DNA: A Deeper Look at Lifelong Learning

By Theresa Sorensen



Lifelong learning is one of the Ten Competencies of our Peer Support *Distinguished Natural Abilities* (DNA). For Peer Support Specialists, lifelong learning is an attitude that focuses on growth and development by staying open-minded, minimizing assumptions, and accepting new insight with humility. This mindset enables our Peer Support Specialists to remain effective and responsive to the rapidly evolving landscape of the peer support discipline.

At CRRS, our dedication to lifelong learning encourages personal growth and resilience within our staff, empowering them to mirror healthy recovery solutions when helping those we serve. Oftentimes, Peer Support Specialists draw from their own recovery experiences, so, through ongoing education, they are equipped with new tools and strategies that help them navigate their journeys. **This continuous development not only reinforces a commitment to their own recovery and well-being, but it also enhances their professional capabilities to assist others; allowing them to serve as powerful recovery models for the people who receive our services.**

Beyond establishing new means for personal and professional growth, lifelong learning also promotes cultural humility, which is a crucial aspect of effective peer support.

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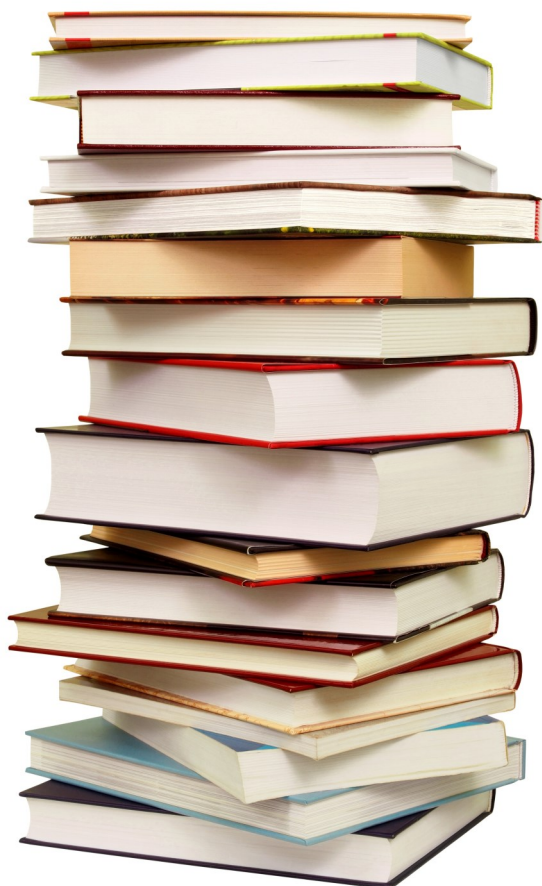
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As our Peer Support Specialists engage in self-reflection and education about various cultural perspectives, they become more aware of their biases and assumptions. This awareness is vital in creating safe inclusive spaces and helps our Peer Support Specialists nurture authentic connections with the people we serve. **When our teams foster cultural humility through lifelong learning, it enables them to tailor recovery approaches and establish the trust and rapport essential for effective peer support.**



As the field of peer support continues to evolve, lifelong learning becomes a powerful approach to strengthening adaptability. By committing to lifelong learning, our Peer Support Specialists stay informed about everything that they need to know to provide the best recovery solutions possible.

This adaptability enhances our teams' capacity to connect with individuals from various backgrounds and increases our awareness and skills in addressing diverse needs and challenges.



Ultimately, our continuous improvement mindset has had a positive ripple effect on our organization's efficacy, and as we embrace lifelong learning, it cultivates a sense of community among our Peer Support Specialists. By sharing knowledge and experiences with each other, we are able to foster collaboration and mutual support, which leads to a stronger network of professionals who are dedicated to enhancing the CRRS recovery culture. This collective growth enhances the overall effectiveness of our peer support services and benefits those we serve.

Like all ten of our Peer Support DNA Competencies,¹ lifelong learning is a way of life. In the words of author and motivational speaker, Anthony J. D'Angelo, **“Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow.”**

1. Martin, C., Ashcraft, L. Peer support learning for the 21st century. Sacramento, CA. Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc. 2017.

Taking on Integrity: The Invisible Plan

By Chris W. Martin



In H.G. Wells' novel, *The Invisible Man*, the main character, Dr. Jack Griffin, discovers the secret to invisibility. During a series of experiments, he turns himself invisible, and in his sole focus to reverse the process, he neglects the people who love and respect him. He instead uses his invisibility for personal gain without regard for others. The tragedy of this story is that Dr. Griffin did not use his unique position in life for the greater good but instead allowed his invisibility to corrupt his integrity.

Living a Life of Integrity

What is integrity? Integrity is a quality of being honest, having strong moral principles, staying true to our values, remaining accountable, and keeping our word. According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, integrity is a state of *being whole*. Another popular definition comes from author C.S. Lewis who said, **“Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching.”** In essence, the potential for great integrity—when it really matters—presents itself in the moments when we may not be visible. We might ask ourselves during those times, “Are we acting and speaking with integrity? Are we staying 100% true to our ethical standards?”

Is 99% Good Enough? ²

Giving less than 99% integrity misses the mark.

Consider the impact when integrity is met at 99%:

- 268,500 defective tires will be shipped this year.
- 20,000 incorrect drug prescriptions will be written in the next 12 months.
- 22,000 checks will be deducted from the wrong bank accounts in the next 60 minutes.
- 291 pacemaker operations will be performed incorrectly this year.
- 107 incorrect medical procedures will be performed by the end of this very day.

The Invisible Plan

So, how can we stay on track and live a life of integrity without leveraging invisibility as a reason to do anything less? Instead of being an invisible woman or man, perhaps we can use an invisible plan. The invisible plan ¹ is just reminding ourselves to stay true to integrity even when no one is watching. If we can do that 100% of the time, we'll be models and mentors for others to do the same. People learn about your heart from your words and actions even if they can't always see you.

Tips for Maintaining Integrity

Here are a few tips to maintain integrity in our lives:

- Lead by example.
- Keep your word.
- Exercise open communication.
- Be accountable for your actions.
- Be willing to stand up for what is right.
- Be civil and respectful.
- Exercise patience and emotional control.

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

2. Transforming Healthcare and Strengthening Results. Retrieved on Sept. 19, 2024 from <https://chcm.com/if-99-9-were-good-enough/>

CRRS Update



The 2025 schedule for our online HCAI 80-Hour MC PSS certification training has been posted to the CRRS website. We have already scheduled 2025 onsite trainings for Stanislaus County and Orange County. If your agency or county is interested in scheduling an onsite training, please contact us and we will add it to the calendar.

PELC Expansion

CRRS is also pleased to roll out our Peer Employment Learning Center (PELC) at our Pleasant Hill and San Diego campuses. This will be the fourth PELC launch in San Diego, and we are excited that our San Diego Peer Support Specialists will get the opportunity to become mentors to our PELC interns.

2024 Training Opportunities

There are still learning opportunities available! CRRS still has three MC PSSC online trainings remaining for 2024 and they are filling up fast. To pre-register for this online training, please visit the following link:

- www.surveymonkey.com/r/CBHI-MC-PSSC-TrainingRegistration

We are also facilitating a couple of onsite, 2-week MC PSS Certification trainings. The first in-person learning opportunity will be in Stanislaus County, October 28 through November 8. The second training opportunity will be in Fresno County, from December 2 through December 13. If you are interested in participating in one of these trainings, please click one of the links below to pre-register and learn more!

To pre-register for the Stanislaus County onsite training, please visit:

- <https://form.jotform.com/231707245986162>

To pre-register for the Fresno County onsite training, please visit:

- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FCDBH-MC-PSSC-TrainingPre-Reg>

All the best,

- Jim Ritchie, CRRS Director of Operations

Training & Continuing Education

Recovery Practices for Ethics and Law for Peer Support

6 hours [6 CES available upon request]

This fun six-hour dynamic, skill-based, and wholly interactive course will provide participants with an understanding of how the recovery movement and principles became the foundation for peer support ethical codes as well as many laws regulating behavior healthcare and psychiatric treatment.



CMPSS Specialization Training for Parent, Caregiver, Family Member Peers-Supporting Family Resilience

40 hours [32 CES available upon request]

The “Supporting Family Resilience” course is a fun, skill-based, and highly interactive workshop for individuals providing specialized peer-to-peer family member and caregiver support services. This 40-hour learning experience will prepare and equip participants with the latest generation of knowledge, skills, and tools for providing, promoting, and empowering family resilience.

CMPSS Specialization Training for Justice Involved Peers— Recovery, Resilience, and Reintegration

40 hours

This dynamic 40-hour, skill-based, and wholly interactive course will provide participants with an understanding of how to provide person-centered support to individuals with justice involvement experiences.



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!

