

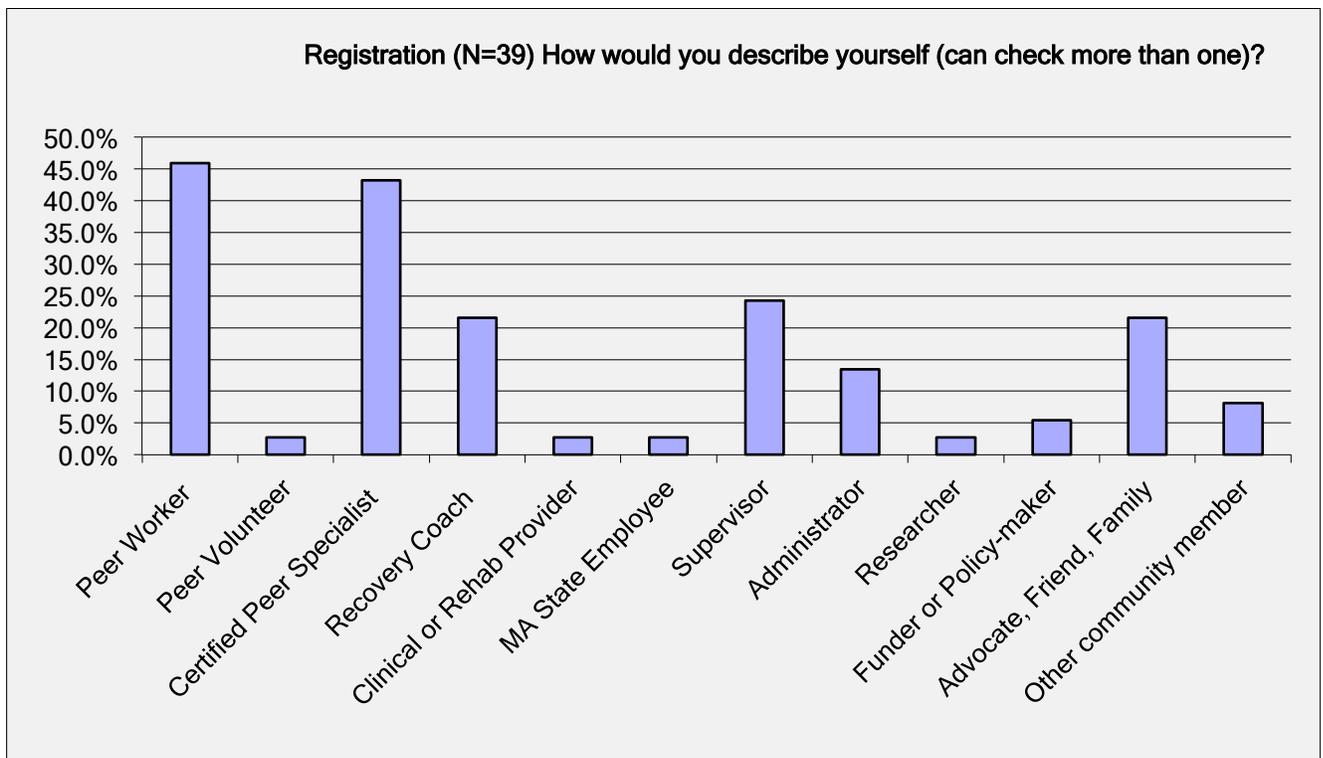


Western MA Community Voice Gathering
April 28, 2016
South Hadley Public Library

2016 Recruitment and Retention Report

Who Registered

39 people registered and 28 participants attended the Western MA Community Voice Gathering. They included people from various Western MA mental health service providers, Windhorse, the WMRLC, Hope for Holyoke Recovery Support Center and the Recover Center in Greenfield.



People were invited to add “Details?” about their role and many did:

- Peer community coordinator
- Vice President of Adult Services (Including MH and SU) for the largest provider in W. Mass.
- Operations and resource coordinator at The RECOVER Project
- Assistant Director - WMRLC
- In group home
- I do peer support with people who struggle, also I work with people in the early stages of substance recovery and help them find treatment options.
- Supervise 3 Recovery Support Centers, Recovery Coaching initiatives

- I am a Peer Worker/ Mentor. I've successfully completed the Recovery Coach Training, I plan to become a certified peer specialist within a year or whenever
- the opportunity comes up again. I help facilitate a peer group called "Discussing the Darkness" weekly and I'm an advocate for my clients through the Center
- for Human Development. I help them to achieve their goals and maintain stability as much as possible.
- CPS and Coordinator of Peer Services for CHD

How did you find out about this job?

- Volunteering
- Craig's List (x2)
- Word of mouth (x4)
- Job fair
- Recovery Learning Center
- AISS – After Incarceration Support Services

Hiring

- Job training places
- Local jails
- Informal internal – team – community
- Craig's list
- Ask about cultural awareness
- Worldview a plus
- Scenarios really helpful to see how others react to people (x2)
- Peer Specialists included in interviews (x2)
- How do we hire – diverse applicants

Why did you apply?

- Created my jobs; started "outing myself" because I wanted to see big change
- Client at a place & saw lacking of client focus at this place. Don't always know the difference between client/staff – I tweaked the job & created my place. Also still wanted to benefit from community by contrasting to it
- Qualified for (x3)
- My own recovery experience

Why take job?

- Create a ladder for job growth (x3)
- Platform to reach society, change thinking
- Like doing something no one has ever done "Radical"
- "in not of system" CPS stance – potential for change
- Past consecutive jobs, this org wanted to help me stay

Pay benefits appealing?

- OK with benefits + income
- Pay wasn't it; had resume gap & had to find a job
- Any job better than none
- Doing interesting work and getting paid for it to; want to do something you like
- Living wage + eased \$ anxiety

Coworkers/Supervisor

- RLC exposure makes it harder I'm one of the activists
- RLC ?impacts larger org – over time we've learned not to talk about lived experience of many things. How matters to be able to name and talk lived experience in meetings.
- Depended on experience prior PS
- Notice what scares others, makes uncomfortable, therefore share in way they receive. Sometimes temper message

Volunteer

- Volunteering can be very meaningful. Bottom line people...want to reflect with people about own experience. A lot like volunteering with animals.
- Meaningful to me in my early recovery to volunteer. I did at first prefer food pantry – it got me out of shame
- Inclusion, strengths, that the vol's have a sense of control because they do have control
- Empowering people; the system has alienated people so much that when I tell people, they get to see how people are overcoming – and people can see for themselves

Retention

- Purpose, feeds me, fulfills me.
- Colleagues care about me. May not be true elsewhere
- Sense of community

Why Stay

- Satisfied
- Appreciated
- Coming to work – not hiding being who you are (x2)
- Nourishing – get a lot of support and connection
- Help people / kindness of coworkers

Why do Peer Specialists leave?

- Money (x5)
- Supervision needs
- Role expectations (x2)

- Values of peer role
- Moved for better opportunities or grow more

Hesitate to work as peer specialist due to:

- Afraid of losing benefits
- Need to maintain own needs

What would help to retain?

- Good pay (x4)
- More support (x3)
- Education on peer roles for others in the agency
- Provide training, prof ?development & incentives

Evaluation

The overall quality of the Western MA Community Voice Gathering was rated “Excellent” by all but two participants who rated it “Good”. All other questions were marked “Excellent” or “Good” except one person who rated the usefulness of the handouts & materials as “Fair”.

Comments about the Gathering and Specific things you valued, Why

- Excellent, deeply grateful, love topics, starting conference. Collaboration & moving forward
- Valued all of it; respect for one another; mutual collaboration
- Thank you for putting this event together. The conversations were helpful.
- Valued the topic breakout group
- Wonderful connections; valued the conversations
- Everyone was so knowledgeable, lots of good thoughts, things to think about—especially the conference coming up
- Valued a good diverse crowd attended, outspoken
- So nice to connect—refreshing!
- Valued hearing about ideas for continuing ed. Conference
- This was less stressful & more rewarding than I anticipated it being
- I actually made & strengthened social connections with the presenters, among others
- Such a wonderful experience! Valued meeting new people with similar outlooks
- Loved this—lots of great info & connections; Valued discussion between MH & substance use worlds
- It was great; valued everybody’s inputs
- Great to come together
- I wish DMH had been represented (had been there to participate, hear it, etc.)
- Valued hearing many voices about what works/doesn’t work for peers

Specific things you would change, How

- Up for much discussion
- Less sitting, more moving
- I think the small group & breakout group sections works well for those of us who tend not to speak up in the very large groups
- Nothing, perfect

Topics & Suggestions for Future Community Voice Gatherings

- The variety of peer support possibilities, what happens elsewhere in the country & around the globe; the future of the peer support & the peer movement
- Substance abuse & mental illness within a family (single parents w/children)