

Recruiting, Hiring & Supporting Peers for HIV Care & Treatment Services July 1, 2009

PEER Center
Peer Education & Evaluation Resource Center



Boston University School of Public Health



Objectives

- Identify strategies for recruiting & hiring peers
- Learn methods for peer orientation & training
- Identify ways to address challenges
- Gain ideas for retaining peers as part of the health care team

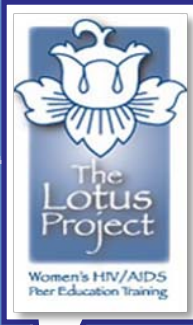
Agenda

- Introduction -BUSPH/PEER Center: Serena Rajabiun
- Speakers
 - **Project ARK/Washington University:**
Stacey Slovacek, Peer Supervisor
 - **Lotus Project/WORLD:**
Maura Riordan, Former Executive Director
 - **Christie's Place:**
Elizabeth Brosnan, Executive Director
 - **Brooklyn Plaza Medical Center:**
Darrell Turner, Director of HIV Services
- Questions & Discussion
- Evaluation

Minority AIDS Initiative/HRSA: Peer Education Training Sites & Resource Evaluation Center

- To improve HIV-related health outcomes for communities of color and reduce health disparities through HIV peer education by:
 - Providing training to HIV peer educators on HIV care, treatment and support
 - Replicating successful peer education programs through training-of-trainers
 - Building capacity in existing HIV/AIDS peer programs or in organizations developing a peer program





Brooklyn Medical Plaza Center
Brooklyn, NY



Project ARK
St. Louis, MO

Christie's Place
San Diego, CA

Project ARK/Washington University

Project ARK/Washington University

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Saint Louis, Missouri 63108

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Peer Program at Project ARK/Washington University

- * Employed by Washington University
- * Paid an hourly wage
- * 5 total peers (2 full-time, 3 part-time)
- * We have two separate peer programs

Family Advisor Team

- Part D Funded
- Project Focused

Treatment Adherence Team

- Part A & D Funded
- Client/Clinic Based
- Members of multidisciplinary team
- Peers are located in clinic sites & private physician offices

Recruitment Process

- Job descriptions are created & approved through HR
 - Washington University administration
- Job is posted on the Washington University website
- Once approved & posted, we begin recruitment:
 - Word of mouth
 - Peers recruit peers
 - Staff recruit peers (physicians, nurses, CM's, etc)
 - Emails, flyers & other materials sent to community (physician offices, clinics, AIDS Service Organizations, Planning Council, Community Advisory Boards, People to People etc.)

Interview Process: Steps/Challenges

1) Complete an on-line application

Challenge: Some peers do not have access to computers

2) Successfully pass background & drug screenings

Challenge: Some peers may have criminal history or may be unable to pass drug screening

3) Provide at least 2 professional references

Challenge: Some peers have sporadic work history or no work history

4) Complete interview with committee members (can include: nurses, managers, peers & other staff)

5) Communicate effectively & sell themselves during an interview

Challenge: Some peers haven't been able to navigate through interview process.

Peer Selection Process

Staff Considerations:

- Was the candidate on time?
- Was the candidate able to share personal experiences during interview?
- Was the candidate able to communicate effectively?
- How did references perceive candidate?
- Does the candidate have the ability & resources to take on role?
- Can candidate work well with others?

Peer Considerations:

- Is this a good fit for me?
- Will earning wages decrease my current benefits? Was I able to communicate effectively?
- Do I have transportation to fulfill this commitment?
- Can I work with my peers without being judgmental?
- Can I avoid inflicting my own personal & religious views?
- Can I maintain confidentiality?
- How will this affect my overall well-being/health?

Orientation & Training

- New employee orientation - Washington University HR
- Peer orientation with supervisor
- Clinic orientation
- Supervisor & peer team 2 day role-play training
- People to People training levels 1 & 2
- Other training opportunities – AIDS Alliance Corp training, African American Red Cross training
- Ongoing evaluation

Materials Provided to Peers

- Washington University Employee Manual
- Key to office area, computer, long-distance code, voice mail code, email address, badge, phone list of all staff members, etc.
- Peer Manual & Forms Utilized in Program
- Planning Council Community Resource Guide to area ASO's/Agencies
- Peer Tool Kit Starter Pack

Components of Retention

Training and Education

- Provide training before and after hire
- It helps if peers have attended People to People training before hire
- Ask peers to identify where they need more training
- Provide continuing education opportunities – monthly
- Ask peers what they feel they need to know
- Local and national conferences and trainings

Supervision

- Peer autonomy with close supervision
- Include peers in program development – make job theirs!!!
- Praise, praise, praise Build problem-solving skills
- Be concrete and use specific examples
- Be accessible as supervisor & listen to concerns
- Honest and open communication
- Feedback! Ongoing supervision is key!

Components of Retention - Continued

Program Development

- Advocate for peer programming within organization & community for buy-in
- Provide education & training to staff on peer programming to enhance communication
- Help peer build a strong support network
- Peer & staff integration – meetings, rosters, etc.

Resources

- Compensation – paid positions, mileage reimbursement, gift cards (training)
- Provide needed educational resources
- Coordinate with Mental Health Specialists for peers to utilize if needed during process
- Provide adequate workspace & materials (computer, phone, etc)

Challenges Faced In Process

- Time management
- Mental health, substance use
- Recruitment
- Lack of resources to perform duties (money for parking, lack of transportation, etc.)
- Boundaries between peers and health care team
- Staff recruitment of peers – can be beneficial, can be challenging
- Role confusion
- Challenges receiving feedback
- Supervision can be a large time commitment

Case Study: Challenges of Hiring, Recruiting & Supporting Peers

Lotus Project/WORLD and Christie's Place

Maura Riordan, Former Executive Director and Consultant

mriordan@womenhiv.org



Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases (WORLD)

Elizabeth Brosnan, Executive Director

brosnan@christiesplace.org



Lotus Project partners with Center for Health Training

Peer Program Overview



- Christie's Place peer program has been in existence since our founding in 1996 – the cornerstone of our service delivery
- Peers are HIV + women as well as men (primarily women)
- Average of 3-4 paid peers and approximately 20 volunteer peers
- Starting wage for paid peers as “Family Case Workers” (formerly Peer Advocates) is \$14-\$15/hour with health benefits
- Peers range from 0.5FTE to 1FTE
- Can and have been any position from Family Case Workers, to Outreach Coordinator, to Childcare Coordinator, and management
- Essential members of our internal multidisciplinary team as well as external teams with collaborative partners

Peer Program Overview



- Peer roles include, but not limited to:
 - non-medical case management
 - health education
 - treatment adherence counseling
 - outreach
 - support group facilitation
 - mentorship
 - practical and emotional support
- Funded by Ryan White Part A, private foundations and agency general funds
- Peer program serves over 1,000 women, children and their family members each year

Job Descriptions



- Executive Director developed formal peer job descriptions in 2002.
- Updated by Program Manager and peers over the past seven years with assistance from the Lotus Project
- Job descriptions were developed based on:
 - Peer work they were doing informally
 - Emotional/practical support
 - Information & referral
 - Care system navigation
 - Mentorship
 - Health education
 - Adjusted based on needs of multidisciplinary team & funding requirements/scopes of work
 - Treatment Adherence
 - Outreach
 - Non-medical case management

Recruitment



- Recruit peers via:
 - E-blasts on local listservs
 - Posting on our website
 - Posting job announcements at clinics and community - based organizations
 - Job announcements at local community planning meetings, support groups, health fairs, etc.
 - Word of mouth
- Recruit from our volunteer base & Lotus Project participants

Recruitment



- Encourage clients to take part in our trainings and volunteering – as a way to develop skills and improve job readiness.
- Vast majority of peers hired have been agency volunteers and Lotus Project graduates (since 2006)
- Staff assist interested and qualified clients & peer volunteers in applying for the job
- Staff can & have helped HIV+ women create résumés and complete the job application

Interview



- Selection committee is generally composed of the Program Manager and Executive Director with input from staff
- Prior to conducting the interview, we inform the peer candidate what to expect and what to bring with them (ex. list of references)
- The interview is conducted by the Program Manager, Executive Director and a peer staff member
- Interview consists of questions developed specifically for peer positions, case scenarios and an opportunity for the candidate to ask questions

Hiring Peers at WORLD



- WORLD Peers are defined as HIV-positive women
- Peer Advocates: roles & responsibilities
- All Peers are paid and eligible for employee benefits
- All employees have a 90-day probation
- Peers are part-time employees
- Program Manager is a former Peer

Qualifications



- Knowledge of HIV infection-related social and emotional issues.
- Demonstrated competency in working with culturally diverse, low-income or no-income clients and special populations required.
- Ability to work well with people and possess strong customer service skills.
- Well organized and detail oriented.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, in person and on the telephone.
- Experience in assisting clients in social services and health care access.
- Knowledge and experience in providing HIV/AIDS education and information is preferred.
- Ability to speak and write Spanish fluently preferred.

Orientation & Training



- Agency and peer orientations
 - Agency “on-boarding” & trainings
 - Shadowing
 - Role playing
- Peers have gone through or will go through the Lotus Training
- Staff are participating in the Lotus TOT to be able to continuously use this curriculum to train new peers as well as build a local base of trained HIV+ women that are “job ready”
- All staff participate in orientation, but coordinated through the Program Manager and/or Executive Director

Orientation & Training



- Materials include:
 - Scope of work & objectives
 - Program materials (intake packets, service guide, flyers, brochures, calendars, PowerPoint presentations, etc.)
 - Job descriptions
 - HR forms
 - Sample work performance appraisal
 - Database training
 - Training manuals
- During orientation peer meets with all staff, several board members, collaborative partners and agency volunteers
- Peers also conduct site visits to local clinics & community-based organizations
- Confidentiality is a key component of peer training
 - Training session(s)
 - Sign confidentiality statement
 - Part of ongoing supervision

Retaining Peers at WORLD

- Decent hourly wage & benefits
- Professional development opportunities are critical
- Supporting Peers to pursue additional education
- Providing a supportive and culturally competent workplace

Addressing Challenges with Peer Employees

- Health issues
- Family issues
- Finances
- Substance use
- Boundaries & professional learning curve

Rising Heights Program

Rising Heights Program
Brooklyn Plaza Medical Center
Brooklyn, New York City

- Darrell Turner, MS
Director of HIV Services
- dturner@brooklynplaza.org



PACT Partner



About Rising Heights

- 8 peer workers on staff
- Peer-workers are paid positions
- 20-30 hours per week
- Part-time one year position
- Community and street outreach and recruitment of new clients

About Rising Heights



Roles of Peers

- Community Outreach
 - Distribute Condoms
 - Street outreach
 - Develop linkages
- Health Education
 - Presentations to various Community-Based and Faith-based Organizations

Recruitment



- The Chief Operations Officer and the Board of Directors played a major role in the hiring process
- Job Description was developed and approved by the Program Director and Human Resources
- Recruitment through word of mouth and in clinic
- Peers recruited from the client population and community at large

Qualifications of Peers

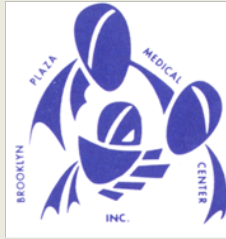


- High School Diploma or GED
- At least one year of outreach experience in HIV and AIDS related activities
- Ability to communicate with community residents from an array of socio-economic and cultural background
- Ability to facilitate groups

Interviewing Process



- Interview process was directed by Chief Administrative officer
- Potentials peers were interviewed by a panel:
 - Chief Administrative Officer
 - Director of Human Resources
 - Nurse, Manager
 - Payroll Administrator
 - Director of the Rising Heights Program
 - HIV Health Educator/Peer Supervisor



Interview Process

- Sample of questions asked at interview
 - On a scale from 1 to 10 how would you rate yourself talking to people about HIV and sex? With 1 being bad and 10 being good.
 - How is your health now?
 - If you were facilitating a group and someone asked “Are you HIV positive?” what would your response be?



Orientation and Training

- Training for peers was held with both in-house and outside sources
- In-house orientation
 - Time-keeping and Payroll Administrator
 - Director of Human Resources
 - Chief Administrative Officer
 - Director of the Rising Heights Program



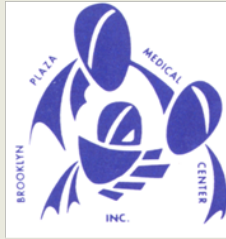
Orientation and Training

- Peers trained by in-house health educator
 - HIV 101
 - Outreach techniques
 - Engaging clients
- Peers Level II training by PACT
 - HIV and AIDS
 - Communication Skills
 - Roles of Peers



Retaining Peers

- Providing rewarding opportunities for consistent and reliable peers
 - e.g., Peer who demonstrated consistently high levels of leadership, accountability and responsibility was given the position of supervisor assistant.
- Informal gatherings e.g., dinners



Retaining Peers

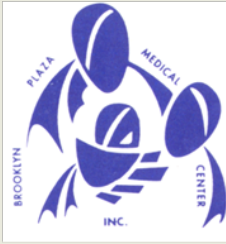
- Courses offered at New York City Department of Health
 - Female Condom demonstration
 - Counseling and Testing
- Leads on HIV testing Initiatives
 - World AIDS Day
 - National HIV Testing Day

Future Plans for Retaining and Supporting Peers



- Mentoring Program
- Participation in Case Management Meetings
- Changes in Supervision

Challenges



- Supervision
- Managing being a patient and a peer-worker
- Helping peers adjust to being part of a formal work environment
- Accountability

Questions & Discussion

Resources

Websites:

- PEER Center: www.hdwg.org/peer_center
- Lotus project: www.lotuspeereducation.org
- PACT project: www.peernyc.org
- WORLD: www.womenhiv.org
- Christie's Place: www.christiesplace.org
- Project ARK: <http://projectark.wustl.edu>

Thank you!

Serena Rajabiun, *PEER Center*

Stacey Slovacek, *Project ARK/Washington University*

Elizabeth Brosnan, *Christie's Place*

Maura Riordan, *Lotus Project/WORLD*

Darrell Turner, *Brooklyn Medical Plaza Center*

For more information please visit
www.hdwg.org/peer_center/

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