

# Organizational Readiness Assessment for Integration of Peer Staff

## Getting Staff, Peer and Stakeholders Buy-In

- Current staff:
  - Do existing staff want peers added to the organization?
  - How will peers enhance or challenge the jobs of current staff?
- Peers:
  - Do peers want to be staff members?
  - How will their relationships with staff and clients be impacted when they become paid professionals rather than volunteer peers or clients?
- Key stakeholders in the community (i.e. Providers, donors, board members):
  - How will providers work with peers?
  - What are providers' concerns or challenges about working with peers? (Develop strategies to address concerns or challenges)
  - Can the Board promote and/or fundraise for peer programs?
  - How will current clients be informed about a formalized peer advocacy program? What feelings may current clients have about a peer program?

## Organizational Values

- Is adding peer advocates consistent with the organization's Mission Statement?
- Value of Peers:
  - Are peers valued equally with other staff at the organization?
  - How is a peer's life experience valued?
  - Is there awareness about the importance of diversity (HIV status, life experience) within the organization?
- Challenges and benefits of incorporating peers:
  - What do you predict as the challenges of incorporating peers?
  - What do you predict as the benefits of incorporating peers?
  - Can the benefits outweigh the challenges?

## Identifying funding sources and other financial issues

- Salaries for peers:
  - How can you set salaries for peers that are neither exploitative, nor cause tension with other professionals?
  - How will a salary impact the peers' benefits? (i.e. insurance, disability etc.)

## Roles and responsibilities

- Does your organization have a framework to define roles and responsibilities for key staff and peers? (If not, can you create one?)
- Can your peers protect their needs as consumers while advocating in organizations where they also receive services? (*"If I complain about treatment my client got, will my own doctor/nurse/case manager be mad at me?"*)

## Developing Programs and Policies

- Is the leadership of the organization ready to accept a peer program?
- Will the peers have a role in decision making? What will their role be?
- Can the peers get input from clients/members regarding decision-making and program plans?
- Are mechanisms in place for clients to express concerns to peers and for peers to advocate for clients in a professional manner?
- Is the organization prepared to spend extra time on professional development for peers?
- Is staff familiar with ADA requirements?

## Advocacy at the Local, State or National Level

- Is advocacy part of the organizational culture?
- Is management willing to advocate for peer inclusion in provider community?