



Peer Support: Overview, Evidence, Strategic Considerations



Peers for Progress

Peer Support Around the World

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Edwin B. Fisher, Ph.D.

Global Director, Peers for Progress

Department of Health Behavior

Gillings School of Global Public Health

University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

The 8,760 Principle

24 X 365.25 = 8,766 hours in a year

6 hours a year in a doctor's office or with other health professional.

8,760 hours “on your own”

- Healthy diet
- Physical activity
- Monitor status
- Take medications
- Manage sick days
- Manage stress – Healthy Coping
- Arrange medical appointments and testing
- Sleep



Evidence



<http://goo.gl/cdbRSR>

Systematic review:

01/01/2000 – 5/31/2011

83.3% of papers → positive effects of peer support

Fisher et al, *Health Affairs* 2015 34: 1523-30; *Clinical Diabetes and Endocrinology*, 2017 3: 4.

Cost Effective

Fisher et al, *Ann Rev Public Health*, 2014.

Peers for Progress. (2014). *Economic Analysis in Peer Support*: <http://goo.gl/OS0iJx>

Fundamental Role of Social Connections & Support



Harlow, H.F., & Harlow, M. (1966)
Learning to love. *American Scientist*
54: 244-272.

Human beings are more effective and happier when they have someone

- they can talk to about personal matters
- who cares about them
- who can help them when they need help

The risk of death associated with social isolation is greater than the risk associated with cigarette smoking

House, Landis & Umberson. *Science*, 1988 241: 540-544.

Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton *PLOSMedicine*, 2010, 7: July e1000316
www.plosmedicine.org

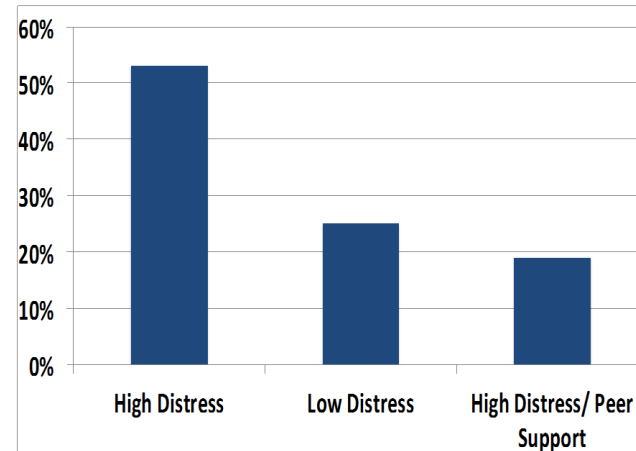
Strategic Considerations

- Engaging, Benefiting “Hardly Reached” (Sokol & Fisher Am J Publ Hlth 2016 106: 1308)
Peer Support Reached Over 85% of
 - Low income, Latino adults with diabetes
 - Single mothers of children hospitalized for asthma

Benefits relative to controls greatest among those in greatest need

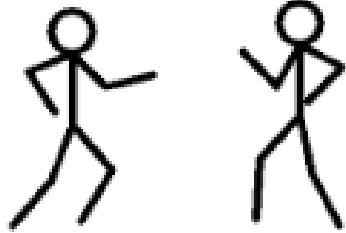
- Reaching Populations
 - 7 Compañeros reached 90% of 3,787
 - Improved blood sugar
- Integrating Behavioral Health and Peer Support
 - Reduced distress and likelihood of hospitalization in Hong Kong (Chan et al. *JAMA Internal Med*, 2014 174: 972-981; Yeung et al. *Clin Diab Endo* 2018 4)

Likelihood of Hospitalization



Who is the *real* Peer Supporter?

Community Health Workers



Promotores de Salud



Health Coaches



Lady Health Workers
(Pakistan)

Village Health Volunteers
(Thailand)

Peer Navigators

Lay Health Advisors

Conceptual Transition??

- **Categorical** – Volunteer, Member of Community, Have/Share Problem at Issue
“That’s not real peer support”
- **Peer Support as a Continuum**
 - Informal support among family, friends, neighbors
 - Volunteers trained to provide specific support, for example, for new mothers
 - Trained Village Health Volunteers in Thailand
 - Staff Lady Health Workers in primary care in Pakistan
 - Full-time member of clinical team
 - Mutual support groups such as for women with breast cancer
 - Online or text support



PEERS FOR PROGRESS

COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE GUIDE

<http://goo.gl/66FiHf>

Accelerate best practices in peer support

Comprehensive – from initial program planning to ongoing sustainability and quality improvement

Flexible – no “one size fits all” but live links (at <http://goo.gl/66FiHf>) to varied resources for each step of the way, planning, training, evaluation, etc.



UNC
GILLINGS SCHOOL OF
GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH



UNC
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE

WHAT WE DO ▾

Who We Are

Learn About Peer Support

Promote Peer Support

Get Connected

Take Action

Tools & Training

News & Events

National Peer Support Network



Peer Support Around the World

Peer support programs and organizations – from small-budget volunteer programs to official parts of health care systems – exist all around the world.

[>FIND PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS](#)



peersforprogress.org

NC Peer Support Net

veronica_carlisle@med.unc.edu

edfisher@unc.edu

FROM THE BLOG



Robina Project Introduces Care Guides to Help Patients with Chronic Diseases

Clayton Velicer, MPH Peers for Progress, the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and the Patient-Centered Primary...

[READ MORE >](#)

HEADLINES & FEATURES



PfP Global Director Presents at NESTA Health Lab

On February 9th, NESTA hosted a one-day conference to explore the digital and social innovations happening in health...

[READ MORE >](#)

SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE



The Role of Evaluation in Developing and Sustaining CHW Coalitions: The Example of the Michigan CHW Alliance

J Ambul Care Manage. 2015 Oct-Dec;38(4):284-96. [PubMed Abstract] The Role of Evaluation in Developing and...

[READ MORE >](#)