

intentional **peers**SUPPORT

Poverty and Opportunity Forum
Vermont 2019



Intentional Peer Support



Intentional Peer Support:
Connection for Co-Creative Relationships

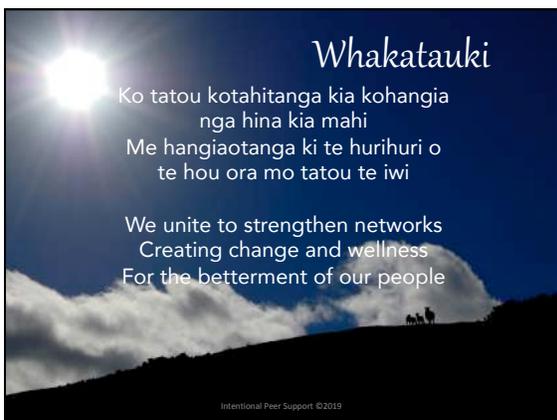
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Whakatauki

Ko tatou kotahitanga kia kohangia
nga hina kia mahi
Me hangiaotanga ki te hurihuri o
te hou ora mo tatou te iwi

We unite to strengthen networks
Creating change and wellness
For the betterment of our people



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The Wounded
must find the
healer within,
And
The Healer must
find the
Wounded within



The wound is the place
where the Light enters you.
-Rumi

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History of IPS



- Many lose relationships when in mental health systems
- Always on the 'getting end'
- **Mutual relationships** bring hope and new meaning

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What Leaders have inspired you?



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What is Intentional Peer Support?

Intentional Peer support is about creating relationships as a tool to take a bigger look at how we've learned to operate in the world



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“As peer support in mental health proliferates, we must be mindful of our intention: social change. It is not about developing more effective services but rather about creating dialogue that have influence on all of our understandings, conversations and relationships.” – Shery Mead

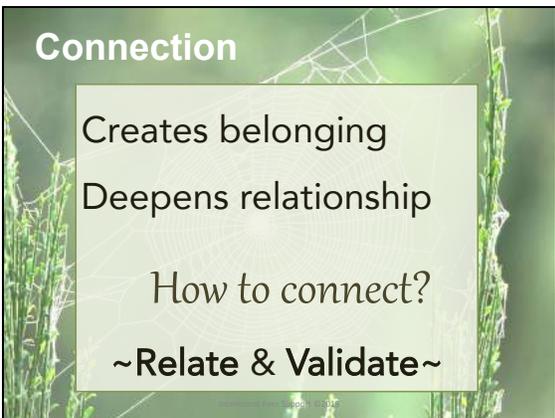
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Connection

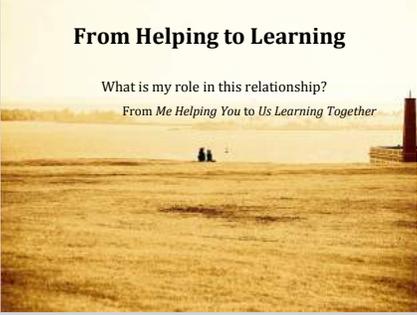
Creates belonging
Deepens relationship

How to connect?
~Relate & Validate~



From Helping to Learning

What is my role in this relationship?
From Me Helping You to Us Learning Together



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What Leaders have inspired you?

Think of a relationship where someone inspired you to move through your comfort zone.

- ∞ What were the **qualities** of that relationship that allowed you to **take risks**?



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If you have come to help me you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

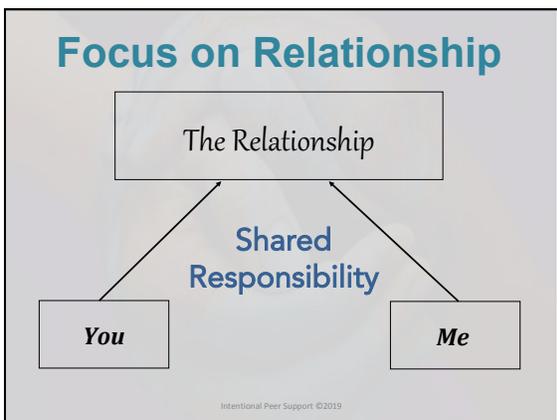
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From Individual to Relationship

<p><i>When it's about the individual</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No one else has to change• We pre-determine outcomes• We lose sight of our own learning• We lose sight of the relational dynamic	<p><i>When it's about the relationship</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Both people contribute to mutual learning• We learn how to communicate with honesty and openness• Our relationship becomes model of other relationships
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From Fear to Hope

- ▷ Fear-based relationships are based on what is wrong and what we are afraid is going to happen
- ▷ Hope-based relationships are based on what is possible, where we are going, and how we can together create something new

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Connection



Disconnection



Reconnection



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Reconnection



- Check out *What happened?*
- Own your part
- Discuss what you both need

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Worldview



- How we come to know what we know
- Trauma- Informed- 'What's wrong' becomes 'What happened?'

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At First Artwork by Beth Filson - www.emflossurvivalart.com

"You're weird, bad, crazy... you deserved it, it's your fault," etc.

I seek help for my problem

I wonder what my problem is

The pressure of secrecy builds



I learn to "act as if"

You say that you like me

"You wouldn't like me if you really knew me"

I feel split in two

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Help Artwork by Beth Filson - www.emflossurvivalart.com

I figure you're the expert...

You wonder if I should be hospitalized

I call you when I feel like my symptoms are out of control

I come to you for help

You give me a diagnosis

You determine treatment based on my symptoms

I start defining my experiences as symptoms

You ask me how I am managing my symptoms... You tell me to watch out for my symptoms



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More of the Same Artwork by Beth Filson - www.emflossurvivalart.com

I see you as "more recovered..."

You suggest a safety contract or a PRN

You ask if I am feeling safe...

I come to a peer for support

We get to know each other

We feel like we are equals until...

I am having a hard time...

You worry that you'll say the wrong thing...or that you'll get in trouble if I do something...



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Peer Support

I come to you for support

We are both the experts, both of us changed as a result of our connection

We listen to each other

We learn a lot about each other

We talk about what works for both of us

We negotiate power, conflict and safety

One of us has a hard time

Instead of talking about safety, we struggle with our fears



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Problem solving

- When is immediate problem solving a good idea?
- What makes you fall into problem solving
- What can you do instead?

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Problem solving vs. moving towards

<p>Problem solving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits what gets talked about • Creates expert/patient mentality • Problem keeps coming up in other forms • Generates frustration (e.g. "yeah but I can't because") 	<p>Moving Towards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opens up a larger story • Dialogic • Creates new ways of looking at things • Generates energy
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Listening for the Untold Story

How can we listen in ways that bring out different Stories?

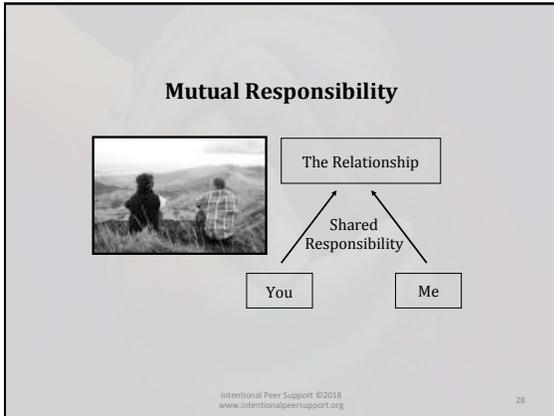
- ▷ Most of the time we only listen for the “told story”, which is the tip of the iceberg.
- ▷ What’s beneath the surface?

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Mutuality: Redefining Help

Learning and growing together	Moving away from a “service” type relationship
It’s only working if it’s working for both of us	Often happens in little moments

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Shifting the focus...
From Fear to Hope & Possibility

Fear-based relationships
are about what's wrong

~

Hope-based relationships
are about what's possible

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Making Noise
versus
Making Music

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The Challenges

~Sitting with Discomfort~
~Taking Risks~
~Holding Multiple Truths~



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Moving Towards

- When connection, worldview and mutuality come together, it culminates in moving towards.
- Crisis can be uncomfortable- even perilous- it can also create opportunities!



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Why IPS?

- Building connections and communities
- Shifting focus from problems to possibilities
- Changing identities from 'Mental Patients' to 'Citizens'
- Changing the world!



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Intentional Peer Support

- Is like a martial art...!!!
- We need to commit to practice



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E Tu Kahikatea

E tu kahikatea
Hei whakapai ururoa
Awhi mai, Awhi atu
Tatou, tatou e
Tatou, tatou e



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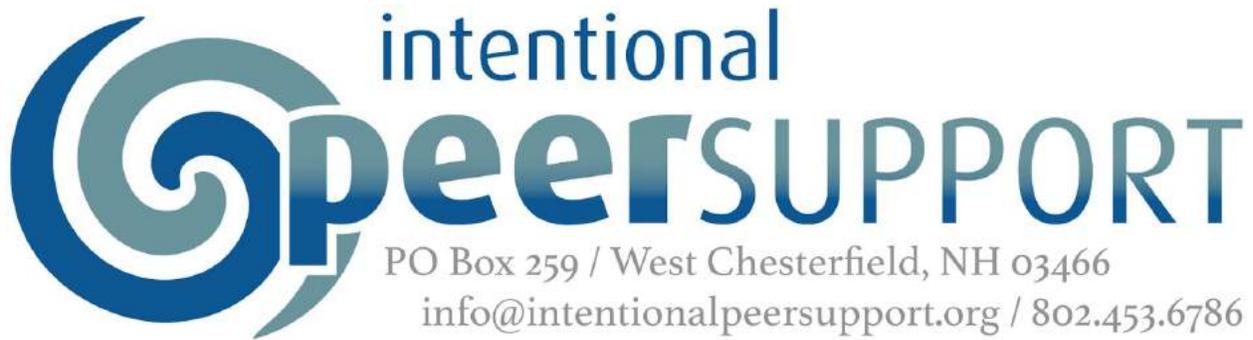
Intentional Peer Support is about...

- ✦ Putting energy into mutual learning relationships as opposed to service relationships
- ✦ Connecting/reconnecting with family, our culture and the community
- ✦ Helping each other take a look at how we've come to make sense of the world
- ✦ Re-defining mental health
- ✦ Figuring out how to make this work for both of us
- ✦ Supporting and challenging each other to move towards the life we want
- ✦ Changing the world!

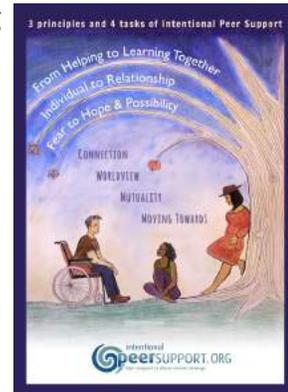


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IPS is a powerful framework for thinking about and creating transformative relationships among people. Practitioners learn to use relationships to see things from new angles, develop greater awareness of personal and relational patterns, and support and challenge each other in trying new things. IPS is used across the world in settings ranging from peer-run respites to traditional mental health services. We come from a history of grassroots alternatives that focus on the possibilities that emerge when relationships become mutual, explorative, and conscious of power.



In IPS, we want to pay attention to the stories we are telling each other and ourselves about who we are and how the world works. We want to be curious about the events that have taken place in our lives that shape our personal stories, or narrative. We want to create relationships based on trust and safety where power is shared, and no one person's story becomes the only story, or the only truth. If we can stay focused on what we both need in order to stay connected, we can begin to explore our old stories and play with new meaning – meaning that has the potential to transform our lives.

Introduction to IPS Training

IPS focuses on three principles and four tasks to create and reflecting upon relationships. The principles - *Helping to Learning, Individual to Relationship, Fear to Hope* - guide intentions. The tasks - *Connection, Worldview, Mutuality, Moving Towards* - guide actions.

The Introduction to IPS 2-Day training touches each of these to illustrate what intentional relationships look like, and provides opportunities to begin practicing. We also explore ways to move beyond problem solving, boundaries and negotiating mutuality, rethinking crisis as opportunity, and listening differently.

IPS is all about opening up new ways of seeing, thinking, and doing, and here we explore how to make this possible.

Though IPS grew from people with lived experience as consumers/survivors/ex-patients of mental health services, it is a framework that anyone can utilize, and is used by people from all walks of life.

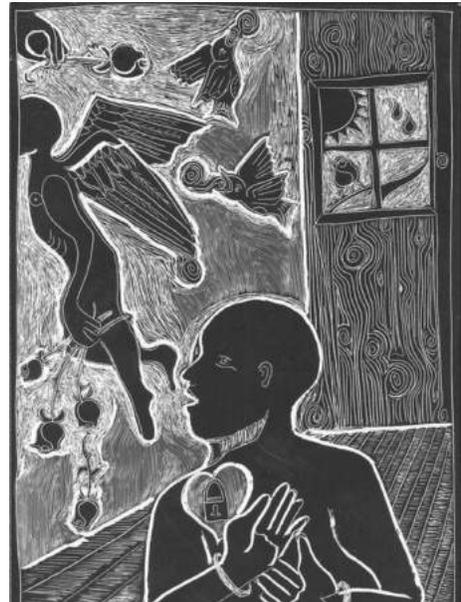
What is Intentional Peer Support?

“As peer support in mental health proliferates, we must be mindful of our intention: social change. It is not about developing more effective services, but rather about creating dialogues that have influence on all of our understandings, conversations, and relationships.” - Shery Mead, Founder of IPS

Intentional Peer Support (IPS) is a way of thinking about and inviting powerfully transformative relationships among people. Practitioners learn to use relationships to see things from new angles, develop greater awareness of personal and relational patterns, and support and challenge each other in trying new things.

IPS is different from traditional service relationships because:

- **IPS doesn't start with the assumption of a problem.** With IPS, each of us pays attention to how we have learned to make sense of our experiences, then uses the relationship to create new ways of seeing, thinking, and doing.
- **IPS promotes a trauma-informed way of relating.** Instead of asking “What's wrong?” we learn to ask “What happened?”
- **IPS examines our lives in the context of mutually accountable relationships and communities** – looking beyond the mere notion of individual responsibility for change.
- **IPS relationships are viewed as partnerships** that invite and inspire both parties to learn and grow, rather than as one person needing to ‘help’ another.
- **IPS encourages us to increasingly live and move towards what we want** instead of focusing on what we need to stop or avoid doing.



“Intentional Peer Support is about conversation. It's about how we know, how we create new “knowing” through dialogue, and about how we as human beings interrelate by beginning to practice the art of connection – with ourselves, the people in our lives, and the people on the planet we may think we have nothing in common with. For me, it is a practice that has no right or wrong. It is always in flux; much like improvisation in music. It is a process of experimentation and co-creation. It assumes that we “play” off each other and create ever more interesting and complex ways of understanding. We see it as a tool for keeping the world on its toes, becoming more comfortable with less predictability as we become less reactive to fear. In other words, it is not another practice that presumes to have the answers but instead, it aims to generate good questions.”

At the end of the day, IPS is really about building stronger, healthier, interconnected communities.

IPS Core Training Overview

Our Core Training is a 5-day introduction to the IPS framework and is designed to have you practicing right away. In a highly interactive environment, participants learn the tasks and principles of IPS, examine assumptions about who they are, and explore ways to create mutual relationships in which power is negotiated, co-learning is possible, and support goes beyond traditional notions of “service.” IPS is all about opening up new ways of seeing, thinking, and doing, and here we examine how to make this possible.

Our Core Training is for anyone interested in peer support and has been widely used as a foundation training for people working in both traditional and alternative mental health settings. Specific topics covered include:

<i>The 4 Tasks: Connection, Worldview, Mutuality, and Moving Towards</i>	<i>The 3 Principles: Helping to Learning, Individual to Relationship, Fear to Hope</i>
<i>History of the Peer Movement</i>	<i>Listening Differently and With Intention</i>
<i>Rethinking Old Roles and Ways of Relating</i>	<i>Working Towards Shared Responsibility</i>
<i>Understanding the Impact of Trauma</i>	<i>Moving Beyond Problem Solving</i>
<i>Examining Power and Privilege</i>	<i>Negotiating Boundaries and Limits</i>
<i>Navigating Challenging Scenarios</i>	<i>Looking at Crisis as an Opportunity</i>
<i>Using Co-Reflection to Maintain Values</i>	<i>Sustaining the Practice</i>

During the Core Training, participants will learn to create relationships where each of us:

- Seek ways to connect, name disconnects, and work to reconnect
- Explore how we have come to understand what we know, particularly when feeling “stuck” or enacting unwanted ways of being
- Strive for mutuality in meeting one another’s needs
- Name and negotiate power in the relationship
- Stay curious, question assumptions, and own judgements and opinions
- Use experience to relate and build trust
- Approach crisis as an opportunity to grow
- Focus on the quality of the relationship instead of fixing one another
- Share risk and responsibility
- Pay attention to the impact of diagnostic language
- Challenge one another to consider new possibilities and to keep the energy at moving towards what we want
- Understand the impact of trauma
- Maintain a focus on social justice by understanding the contexts in which lives become disrupted and allying with one another to combat oppression

IPS CORE TRAINING (5 DAYS)

Our Core Training is an extensive overview of the IPS framework and is designed to have you practicing right away. In a highly interactive environment, participants learn the IPS tasks and principles, examine assumptions about who they are, and explore ways to create mutual relationships where power is negotiated, co-learning is possible, and support goes beyond traditional notions of 'service'. Our Core Training is for anyone interested in mutual support and has been widely used as a foundation training for people working in both traditional and alternative human services settings.

ADVANCED TRAINING (3 DAYS)

After a Core Training, lots of questions emerge—most commonly, “How do I make this stuff work in my particular environment?” Our 3-day Advanced Training deepens IPS practice, plays out the principles and tasks using real-life scenarios, enhances ways of building mutual connections, and teaches participants the art of Co-Reflection. Here we also focus on crisis as an opportunity to connect, maintain mutuality, and build a culture of healing. The Advanced Training can be customized to your organization’s needs.

TRAIN-THE-TRAINER (5 DAYS)

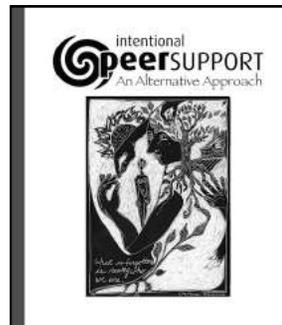
Through our Train-the-Trainer course, we’ve designated hundreds of IPS enthusiasts to teach the full content of our Core Training where they work. Having IPS trainers at your organization ensures IPS is sustainable and evolving.

We also offer Introductory, Refresher, and other Advanced Trainings, and can customize trainings to suit your area’s needs. Please contact us.

IPS Resources

Our website includes books, articles, videos, and additional information about IPS:

www.intentionalpeersupport.org



INTENTIONAL PEER SUPPORT: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

By Shery Mead
Updated 2017
189 pages

Available on our website

A central part of our Core Training, this innovative curriculum and extensive workbook details the difference between peer support and other helping practices. It includes appendices for warmlines, peer-run crisis programs, resources for peers working in the system, and more.

Contact Us



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*From Helping to Learning
From Individual to Relationship
From Fear to Hope & Possibility*



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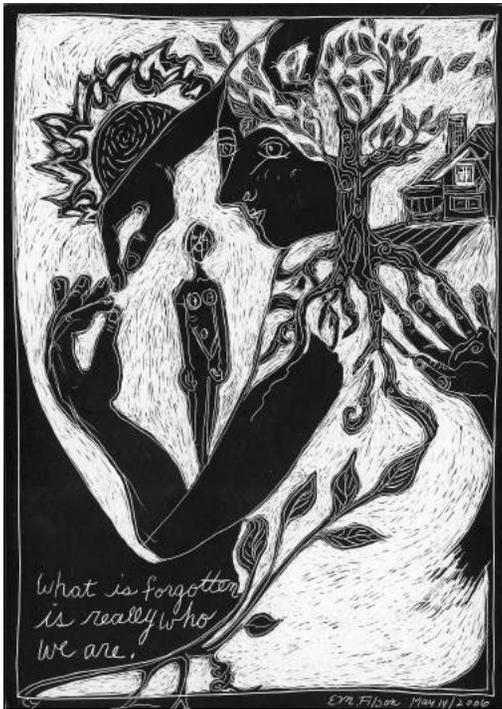
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Artwork by Beth Filson

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Trainings in IPS

“If I had only a single training to send staff, it would be IPS without hesitation. A must for anybody currently in this field or aspiring to be. To characterize it as a training is a disservice. It was a life-changing event.”

- Jack Bennett, Regional Director, Hudson Valley Recovery Center



“A life-changing, perspective-altering, mind-opening experience. I now have the tool kit I instinctively knew I needed.”

- Llewellyn Cumming, Regional Recovery Specialist