



The Abundance of
Support in
Coordinated Specialty
Care – First Episode
Psychosis Programs:

*Reflections on
Supporting a Youth Peer
Support (YPS)*

Agenda

Overview of early psychosis care and the significance of early intervention

Introduction to the NAVIGATE model and Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) components

Implementation of NAVIGATE and recovery-oriented practices in Missouri

National standards, funding, and the role of SAMHSA

Integration of the recovery model and peer support within EPC

Key partnerships: Missouri DMH, MIMH, and NAMI Missouri

Essential recovery, assessment, and crisis prevention tools

Outcome measurement, program evaluation, and future directions for EPC in Missouri

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a small, vibrant green plant. The background is a soft-focus forest with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a warm, golden glow. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

Hope Dealing & Promoting
Wellness

Living Experience: Peers Leading the Way

Peers use their lived experience to offer emotional support, practical advice, and hope, helping clients navigate recovery and behavioral health challenges.

Peer support can improve engagement with services, increase satisfaction with treatment, and reduce feelings of isolation and stigma.

Clients supported by peers often experience improved self-esteem, increased sense of belonging, and greater optimism about recovery.

Peer involvement is associated with lower rates of hospitalization, reduced relapse, and better long-term outcomes, including enhanced self-management and quality of life.

Families benefit from peer support through reduced stress, increased resilience, and improved mental health, as well as feeling less blame and shame about behavioral health conditions.

Peers can help connect families to resources, normalize their experiences, and encourage active participation in care planning and decision-making.

Psychosis & Stigma: Changing Perspectives

Authentic Empathy and Relatability
Their direct experience with trauma, substance use, and psychosis allows them to connect deeply and authentically with clients, offering empathy that goes beyond clinical understanding.

Reducing Isolation and Stigma
By openly sharing their own journey, they help normalize experiences like hearing voices or seeing things, reducing shame and social isolation for clients who may feel alone in their struggles.

Modeling Recovery and Resilience
They serve as living proof that recovery and meaningful life are possible, providing hope and motivation for clients to engage in their own recovery process.

Trauma-Informed Support
Their awareness of trauma and its impact enables them to create safe, trusting spaces where clients feel understood and less likely to be retraumatized, complementing trauma-informed care approaches

Practical Guidance and Advocacy
They can offer concrete advice on navigating hospitalizations, dealing with unsupportive family, and managing co-occurring substance use, as well as advocate for client needs within treatment systems.

Facilitating Social Connection
By fostering trust and acceptance, they help clients build social skills and connections, which are crucial for recovery from psychosis and for counteracting the vulnerability of isolation.

Empowering Clients' Voices
They encourage clients to share their own experiences and participate actively in their care, helping to shift perspectives from stigma and helplessness to empowerment and self-determination.

Supporting Engagement with Services
Their presence and mentorship can increase clients' engagement with outpatient care and recovery-oriented activities, leading to improved outcomes and reduced hospital readmissions.

Youth peer supporters play a unique and vital role in behavioral health, especially for those experiencing psychosis, by bridging gaps that traditional clinical approaches may not fully address.

Where It Started: The Abundance Project

It started with a conversation and ended in a vision: ABUNDANCE of Support



Malinda and Vicky envisioned... what effective youth support could be and recognized that for youth peer programs to thrive, a strong foundation of support is essential. An abundance of support means providing consistent encouragement, radical acceptance, meeting them where they are, being curious, access to resources, coaching, mentoring, specialized training, role play, modeling, and open communication. This environment allows youth peers to feel confident, valued, seen, supported and equipped to handle challenges/conflict. When support is plentiful, peers are more likely to succeed in their roles—they can build trust with others, develop leadership skills, and create a positive impact within their communities.

Not Just a Peer, But a Youth Peer?

Youth peers provide a unique connection by sharing similar age-related experiences, making their support more relatable and accessible to young clients.

Youth peers can empower other youth by modeling recovery, fostering self-help skills, and promoting youth leadership within mental health systems.

Youth peer support increases hope, self-esteem, and belief in recovery among young people, who may otherwise be reluctant to engage with traditional services.

Youth peers are especially effective in reducing feelings of social exclusion and isolation, which are common during adolescence and young adulthood.

Youth peer programs improve satisfaction with services, increase youth participation in care decisions, and help young people develop coping and social skills.

Youth peers advocate for the youth voice in treatment planning and system change, ensuring services are more responsive to the actual needs and preferences of young people.

By facilitating group activities and peer-led discussions, youth peers create safe spaces for sharing and growth, further enhancing engagement and outcomes for youth and their families.

While all peers provide vital support and connection in behavioral health, youth peers offer a distinct, age-relevant perspective that fosters empowerment, engagement, and improved outcomes specifically for young clients and their families.



Abundance
Examples

Early Psychosis Care Overview

Definition and
importance of early
intervention

Duration of
Untreated
Psychosis (DUP) as
critical factor

Evidence base for
specialized EPC
programs

National and
Missouri context
for EPC
development

Key stakeholders in
Missouri's EPC
initiative

First Episode Psychosis - Impact and Intervention

Typical onset and presentation in late teens/early adulthood

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graph TD; A[Typical onset and presentation in late teens/early adulthood] --> B[Economic and social costs of untreated psychosis]; B --> C[Benefits of specialized early intervention services]; C --> D[Cost-effectiveness across national contexts]; D --> E[Preventing disruptions in education, employment, and relationships];
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Economic and social costs of untreated psychosis

Benefits of specialized early intervention services

Cost-effectiveness across national contexts

Preventing disruptions in education, employment, and relationships

NAVIGATE Model Introduction

Developed for RAISE-ETP study comparing to usual care

Comprehensive treatment approach for ages 15-30

Philosophy: Guiding individuals toward psychological and functional health

Shared decision-making approach emphasizing strengths and resilience

Collaboration with clients and families in treatment planning

NAVIGATE Program Implementation in Missouri

Implementation history (2014-present)



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graph TD; A[Implementation history (2014-present)] --> B[Current sites and service capacity]; B --> C[Adaptations for Missouri communities]; C --> D[Training infrastructure and workforce development]; D --> E[Fidelity assessment processes and outcomes];
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Current sites and service capacity

Adaptations for Missouri communities

Training infrastructure and workforce development

Fidelity assessment processes and outcomes

Coordinated
Specialty
Care – First
Episode
Psychosis
(CSC – FEP)

NIMH-recommended core
activities:

- Cognitive/behavioral psychotherapy
- Medication management
- Family education and support
- Service coordination/case management
- Supported employment and education

Missouri's enhancement: Peer
support integration

Building Trust in Us: Progress

Coordinated specialty care programs
and their fidelity

NAVIGATE model and the roles
within the model fidelity

Real examples from our caseload:
trying outside-the-box interventions:

Watching Inside Out 2, identification of emotions, using body worksheets, helping the client identify the emotions they experience and where they feel this in their body, then providing a copy to their families and our team to help them regulate when needed.

Client went from nonverbal, brief verbal comments, intensive internal stimulation, auditory and visual hallucinations, now socializing, very communicative, walking, meeting at the coffee shop, starting to volunteer, and experiencing domestic violence.

Clinical and Peer Supervision Unite!



Clinical and peer supervision together provide youth peers with both professional guidance and lived-experience support.



Clinical supervision helps youth peers maintain boundaries, navigate complex cases, and develop clinical skills.



Peer supervision offers a safe space for sharing experiences, mutual learning, and emotional support, reducing isolation and burnout.



Combining both approaches ensures youth peers receive wraparound support, balancing skill development with self-care and well-being.



This partnership enhances role clarity, confidence, and effectiveness for youth peers, leading to better outcomes for the clients they serve.

Team Approach: Coordinated

CSC-FEP teams provide youth peers with training, supervision, and ongoing support to help them succeed in their roles.

Teams foster strong internal communication and a shared understanding of each member's role, ensuring peers are valued and integrated into care planning.

Youth peers are included in decision-making, offering their lived experience to help clients make informed choices and feel understood.

CSC-FEP teams create youth-friendly, flexible environments that empower youth peers to connect authentically with clients.

Peers receive support to maintain clear boundaries and a distinct role, while still collaborating closely with clinical staff.

Teams encourage youth peers to facilitate group activities, model recovery, and provide anti-stigma support, which boosts confidence and engagement for clients.

CSC-FEP teams help youth peers connect clients to resources for education, employment, and community participation, supporting holistic recovery.

A professional studio microphone with a silver mesh grille and a black pop filter is mounted on a stand. The background is a blurred recording studio with a computer monitor and warm lighting. The text "Youth Voice" is overlaid in the center.

Youth Voice

Youth Advisory Boards & Conferences

Youth voices - helping the youth and young adults of tomorrow find their voice, use that voice, and advocate for themselves by being supported through radical acceptance, unconditional high regard, and being a hope dealer.

Decreasing stigma related to psychosis, making change across the organization, and creating a different, more embracing company culture.

Youth & Young Adults: The Next Professional

Youth peer support specialists are a rapidly growing workforce, using their lived experience to connect with and empower young people facing mental health challenges.

They model hope, self-advocacy, and recovery, inspiring peers to set and achieve personal goals and believe in their own potential.

Youth peers bring unique perspectives to service teams, helping to destigmatize mental health and ensure youth voices are heard in care planning and system change.

Their roles are increasingly recognized as professional, with opportunities for career advancement, leadership, and specialized training.

As the next generation of behavioral health professionals, youth peer specialists are building a more inclusive, relatable, and effective support system for future youth and young adults

SAMHSA National Standards for EPC

Mental Health Block Grant set-aside requirements

Financing strategies for sustainability

Service components and coverage considerations

Required program elements and quality metrics

Integration with broader behavioral health systems

The Recovery Model Approach

Recovery as an
organizing principle for
service delivery

5 Stages of Recovery
Chart application

Stress-vulnerability
model as heuristic
framework

Focus on personal goals
rather than symptom
reduction alone

Building resilience
through strengths-based
approaches

Peer Support in Early Psychosis Care

Definition: Support
by individuals with
lived recovery
experience

Value: Shared
understanding,
respect, mutual
empowerment

Integration with
NAVIGATE clinical
teams

NAMI Missouri
Peer-to-Peer
program

Peer specialist
qualifications and
training in Missouri

Missouri
DMH Early
Psychosis
Initiatives

Partnership with
MIMH and
Missouri Behavioral
Health Council

SAMHSA funding
implementation

Technical assistance
and quality
improvement
support

Workforce
development and
training priorities

Data collection and
outcome
monitoring systems

Missouri Institute of Mental Health Partnerships

MIMH vision and mission for mental health improvement

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graph TD; A[MIMH vision and mission for mental health improvement] --> B[Research, program development, and evaluation expertise]; B --> C[Training and technical assistance capabilities]; C --> D[Collaborative role in Early Psychosis Care Center]; D --> E[Knowledge translation and dissemination strategies];
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Research, program development, and evaluation expertise

Training and technical assistance capabilities

Collaborative role in Early Psychosis Care Center

Knowledge translation and dissemination strategies

NAMI
Missouri
Resources and
Support

Peer-to-Peer program structure and benefits

Family education and support resources

Recovery-oriented tools and approaches

Complementary role to clinical services

Creating safe spaces for mutual support
and growth

Core Recovery Tools for Practitioners

Telling Your Recovery Story Tool: Structured approach to sharing lived experience

Strengths Assessment: Identifying capabilities and resources

OARS Worksheet: Motivational interviewing skill development

Change Plan Worksheet: Goal-setting and action planning

Readiness Ruler Tool: Assessing motivation for change

Assessment
and
Measurement
Tools

Physical Wellness Assessment:
Addressing whole-person health

Dissatisfaction Tool: Identifying areas for
desired change

PICBA Tool: Structured problem-solving
approach

FICA Spirituality Tool: Exploring
spiritual dimensions of recovery

Decisional Balance Tool: Weighing pros
and cons of change

Crisis Prevention and Intervention Tools



Crisis Prevention Plan:
Identifying triggers and
coping strategies



Moving Through FEAR
Worksheet: Addressing
fear-based barriers



Catch it Check It Change
It Worksheet: Cognitive
restructuring approach



Recovery Dialogues:
Structured conversation
guides



Initial Meeting Steps:
Engaging approach for
first contacts

Outcome Measurement and Program Evaluation



Future Directions for EPC in Missouri

Expansion to
additional sites
and populations

Enhanced
integration of peer
specialists

Addressing co-
occurring
substance use
disorders

Telehealth
innovations for
rural access

Improved
transitions to long-
term support

Advancing the
evidence base
through practice-
based research

Youth Support Specialist Job Description

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS – JOB SPECIFIC

Youth Peer Specialists ignite the spark of hope that recovery is possible while promoting skills for coping with and managing symptoms and encouraging the use of natural supports and enhancement of community living skills.

Helping youth aged 13 – 25 years old who have mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders develop a network for information and support.

Providing support to youth through strategic sharing of their personal experience and by aiding youth in building skills in resilience and self-advocacy.

Provide outreach to youth in the community with the purpose of engaging them in services, identifying barriers, and providing support and resources to the youth.

Identify and help connect youth with professional/personal development opportunities, support groups, and community resources.

Provide moral support during crisis or other crucial periods.

Assisting youth to make independent choices and to take a proactive role in their treatment.

Assisting youth with identifying strengths and personal resources to aid in achieving their goals.

Participates as a member of the treatment team, giving input on client Wellness Plans and treatment team decisions.

Educate youth, family members, service providers, and stakeholders about the importance and value of authentic youth voice in individual treatment planning.

Appropriately submit required documentation, attend meetings, and participate in other activities as defined by the treatment team, family, and youth.

Thank You! ~ Questions?

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