Technology And Peer Support: Trends And Opportunities

Karen Fortuna, Ph.D., M.S.W.
Vincent Caimano, Ph.D.
Presenters

Karen Fortuna, Ph.D., M.S.W.
Dartmouth College

Vincent Caimano, Ph.D.
Peer Support Solutions
Radical Innovations in Digital Peer Support

Karen L. Fortuna, PhD, LICSW
Assistant Professor
Department of Psychiatry, Dartmouth College
Agenda

1. Service Delivery Benefits of Digital Peer Support for Mental Health and Substance Use Challenges

2. Effectiveness of Digital Peer Support for Mental Health and Substance Use Challenges

1. Digital Peer Support Technologies Available

1. Challenges of Digital Peer Support

2. Peer and Academic Partnership

1. Digital Peer Support Certification

1. Peer Support Smartphone App Database
Benefits of Digital Peer Support

• Origins began in 2005 in the United States;
• No geographical limitations;
• No time limitations;
• Engages service users in digital mental health outside of clinical environments;
• Expands the reach of peer support services;
• Increases the impact of peer support without additional in-person sessions; and
• Can access hard-to-reach groups—rural residents, home-bound adults, etc.

Benefits of Digital Peer Support

Augmentation of Tradition Clinical Practice through Digital Peer Support

Is Digital Peer Support Effective?

Digital peer support studies have established support for the feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary effectiveness with regard to:

- Enhancing hope, quality of life, empowerment, social support, and recovery;
- Enhancing functioning;
- Reducing symptoms; and
- Improving engagement in services.

Is Digital Peer Support Effective?

Digital peer support studies have established support for the feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary effectiveness with regard to....

Substance Use Challenges

- Reductions in risky substance use;
- High levels of satisfaction and perceived benefit;
- Engagement in services.

Technology is a Means for Human Connection

The Role of Peer Support Specialists in the Digital Era

Enhancing Standards and Principles in Digital Mental Health With Recovery-Focused Guidelines for Mobile, Online, and Remote Monitoring Technologies

Karen L. Fortuna, Ph.D., M.S.W., Robert Walker, M.S., C.O.A.P.S., Daniel B. Fisher, M.D., Ph.D., George Mois, L.M.S.W., Stephanie Allan, M.A., Patricia E. Deegan, Ph.D.

Before the 1970s, the notion that people diagnosed as having a mental health condition could manage symptoms and return to work, school, and a full life in the community was not widespread. Through advocacy efforts by people with lived experience of a mental health condition, recovery-focused care has become a fundamental part of mental health service delivery across the globe (1) and is considered a complementary approach to traditional biomedical psychiatric care (2).

Digital mental health interventions should embrace multiple dimensions of health. People with lived experience of a mental health condition commonly present with other difficulties such as health conditions, substance use issues, and lack of social support—all of which affect overall health. Mental health recovery is not a singular task of monitoring and addressing psychiatric symptoms; rather, recovery involves addressing the complex interaction between an individual’s biological, psychological, and sociocultural...
Challenges of Digital Peer Support

Certified Peer Specialists’ Perspective of the Barriers and Facilitators to Mobile Health Engagement

Karen L. Fortuna 1 · Anjana Muralidharan 2 · Carly M. Goldstein 3 · Maria Venegas 4 · Joseph E. Glass 5 · Jessica M. Brooks 6

Received: 13 November 2019 / Revised: 17 March 2020 / Accepted: 6 April 2020
© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2020

Abstract
This study examined certified peer specialists’ perceptions of the barriers and facilitators to mobile health (mHealth) engagement. A total of 267 certified peer specialists from 38 states completed an online survey. Of this sample, 74 certified peer specialists completed open-ended questions. Data were analyzed from the 74 respondents who responded to open-ended questions. Certified peer specialists identified previously unidentified facilitators including the augmented use of certified peer specialists in combination with mHealth to improve engagement. One emerging theme identified was the belief that mHealth interventions may promote social isolation if not designed appropriately. Certified peer specialists appear to prefer using tablets instead of smartphones. Integrating certified peer specialists’ perspectives of barriers and facilitators to mHealth engagement may promote initial and sustained mHealth engagement among consumers with serious mental illness. Future research using implementation science frameworks should examine these previously identified barriers and facilitators to mHealth engagement as correlates and/or predictors of engagement among service users.
Peer-Academic Partnership

Partnership is based on collaboration, engagement, shared decision-making, principles of reciprocal relationships, co-learning, partnership, trust, transparency, and honesty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning the Study</th>
<th>Conducting the Study</th>
<th>Disseminating Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Intervention development</td>
<td>- Recruitment</td>
<td>- Social media, blogs, newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Developing research question</td>
<td>- Retention</td>
<td>- Presentations at local and nationals organization, provider and academic conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Determining outcomes</td>
<td>- Intervention delivery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selecting Peer Support Apps

**Step #1:** Our co-production team searches the App Store and Google Play weekly for “Peer Support”.

**Step #2:** Next, we screen for peer support specialists’ digital technology standards, such as 508 compliance, recovery language and principles, features to allow for communication between peers, inclusion peer-supported evidence-based practices, peer developed or co-produced with allies.

**Step #3:** Peer support apps that meet peer support specialists’ digital technology standards are included into our database.

**Step #4:** Peer support specialists’ and service users’ assess the value or quality of peer support apps based on their personal experience with the app.
The Digital Peer Support Certification has been found to an effective knowledge translation training that has shown to increase peer support specialists’ knowledge, confidence, and capacity to use digital peer support in practice.

Fortuna, K et al. Strategies to Impact Peer Support Specialists’ Capacity to Use Digital Peer Support Technology. (under review).
1,550 Peer Support Specialists Trained

http://digitalpeersupport.org/certification/
Fortuna, K et al. Strategies to Impact Peer Support Specialists’ Capacity to Use Digital Peer Support Technology. (under review).
Iterative Intervention Co-Design

Feasibility, Acceptability, and Preliminary Effectiveness of a Peer-Delivered and Technology Supported Self-Management Intervention for Older Adults with Serious Mental Illness

Authors and affiliations

Smartphone app may help older adults manage serious mental illness and chronic health conditions

New study in The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry indicates that middle-aged and older adults have the potential to use tailored smartphone interventions to self-manage their illness

Innovative Apps Connect Elderly to Psychiatric Care
Smartphone technology offers wide-ranging opportunities for delivering essential interventions directly to patients, making treatment more efficient and, in some cases, more effective.

http://digitalpeersupport.org/app-development/
Virtual Delivery of Effective Peer Support Services

Mental Health America Webinar
Technology and Peer Support: Trends and Opportunities
May 26th, 2020

Vincent F. Caimano, Ph.D.
Co-Founder & CEO
Peer Support Solutions
vcaimano@peersupportsolutions.com
(818) 430-3414
About Peer Support Solutions

Pioneering provider of video-based
- Peer support groups since 2009
- Peer coaching
- One-on-one peer connections
- Deidentified summary data analytics

Peer Support is at our core
- We help bring together people with common needs to help each other
- We have groups that help with Behavioral Health, Chronic Illnesses and Rare Diseases
What We Do

We assist individuals, non-profit organizations and healthcare providers to engage in or offer peer support

• Efficiently
• Confidentially and conveniently
• With measurable satisfaction and effectiveness

We help individuals in over 130 countries

• Tens of thousands participants
• 700+ monthly meetings

We do this via our purpose-built, video and text-based apps
Our 3rd Generation Technology

**Convenient**
- Accessible on desktop and mobile devices

**Compliant**
- HIPAA
- Section 508
- FDA compliant device

**Process Patent Pending**
- Predictive analytics
- Unique approach of recording real-time health data
  - Patient and observer perspective
  - Easily available and understandable to clinicians
- Measure changes in patient symptoms, effectiveness of medications, and adherence to treatment

**Confidential**
- Participants can be anonymous

**Configurable**
- Branded content, white label solution
- Any meeting format

**Measurement-Oriented**
- Many data capture options
- Outcome tracking and progress feedback
- Analysis and research functionality
The Growing Family of PSS Organizations and Services
Meeting Overview

1. Meeting Start-up
   1. Meeting Guidelines
   2. Check-in
2. Today’s Topic: Stress Management
3. Sharing / Supporting
   1. Talk Time
   2. Self-Care Planning / Close
## PSS Outcomes

### 2015 Survey of Depression Recovery Groups participants, N=142

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderately to severely depressed</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urgent care for depression, bipolar or anxiety</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency room for depression, etc.</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitalized for depression, etc.</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Participant Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The **group leader** seemed warm, supportive, and concerned.

- **38** (2%)
- **19** (1%)
- **44** (2%)
- **312** (16%)
- **1515** (79%)

I had an **opportunity to talk** about the problems that are bothering me.

- **42** (2%)
- **26** (1%)
- **123** (6%)
- **384** (20%)
- **1340** (70%)

I learned some new **ways** to deal with my problems.

- **54** (3%)
- **55** (3%)
- **253** (13%)
- **570** (30%)
- **987** (51%)

I believe **the meeting was helpful** to me.

- **42** (2%)
- **48** (3%)
- **104** (5%)
- **514** (27%)
- **1197** (63%)

I intend to use what I **learned** in today’s meeting.

- **38** (2%)
- **26** (1%)
- **202** (11%)
- **544** (28%)
- **1103** (58%)

I would recommend this service to **others**.

- **29** (2%)
- **12** (1%)
- **56** (3%)
- **319** (17%)
- **1456** (78%)
The Hey Peers! Platform

• PSS’s 3rd generation platform
• Adds
  o Text-based confidential peer support
  o Progress tracking tools
• Flexible, easy to use
• High quality interactions
  o Certified / licensed peer supporters
  o Organization sponsored services
• Helps organizations to measure the impact of their services
Real Humans. Real Help. Real Time

Hey Peers is a video chat app that allows people to safely browse and join peer support conversations and meetings.

Get Started
NAMI Billings, a NAMI Affiliate founded in 1995 in Billings, Montana, is dedicated to helping and supporting volunteer grassroots leaders as they raise awareness about mental health conditions and provide local education, advocacy and support group programs for those living with mental challenges and the loved ones who care for them. NAMI Billings provides all services FREE OF CHARGE due to the generosity of the Billings community.

Have questions?
NAMI Billings
Visit website

Group Leaders

Resource Library
Group Guidelines.jpg
Emotional Stages.jpg
Principles of Support.jpg
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chat Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Join Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Mamas Chat Room</td>
<td>A safe space for women who wish to connect with other women in pregnancy and/or postpartum and discuss the emotional aspects of motherhood, including...</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Join</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRAP - Wellness Recovery Action Plan</td>
<td>Learn about WRAP and how it can be an effective tool to take your recovery to the next level.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Join</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depression and anxiety battles</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Join</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Unquiet Mind - Bipolar Group Chat</td>
<td>A place for those with bipolar disorder to discuss with and support each other.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Join</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving Me</td>
<td>This group chat is for parents who have a mental illness and have a child or children with special needs.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Join</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain Injury Support</td>
<td>This chat room is available for individuals to discuss challenges, changes, and triumphs after brain injury.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Joined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Does the Future Hold?

1. Living through COVID-19 =
   Living through The Great Depression or a Major War

2. We will be more
   - Cautious / careful about social interactions
   - Anxious / feel more vulnerable about the threat of a new pandemic
   - Comfortable with technology as a way to relate to others

3. Organizations will continue to virtual services
Q & A

Karen Fortuna, Ph.D., M.S.W.
Karen.L.Fortuna@Dartmouth.edu
digitalpeersupport.org

Vincent Caimano, Ph.D.
vcaimano@peersupportsolutions.org