

**UWSW PEER-RUN RESPITE WORK GROUP: Following statewide dialog and listening sessions in July and August 2013, peers statewide were invited to serve on work group tasked with further consideration of some key issues. Eleven peers across the state were part of this group. Here are the results of their dialog process:**

**Work Group Consensus on Homelessness as a Barrier:**

- The primary goal of peer-run respite is to provide crisis support and crisis prevention for people with mental health and/or substance use needs, regardless of their housing status.
- Regardless of housing status, extensions beyond the maximum stay will be rare, and made on a case-by-case basis.

**Work Group Consensus on Training:**

- Good peer support is based on values, knowledge and skills about recovery and wellness, including trauma-informed peer support, choice, self-direction, mutuality and empowerment.
- Certification is one way of acquiring these knowledge and skills, but it is not the only way, and good peer support values may or may not be related to certification training.
- Peer Specialist Certification should not be a requirement for being hired as a peer supporter in a peer-run respite. The requirements should be based on the values, knowledge and skills offered by an individual. While certification is an asset, other training and experience should be equally considered.
- All peer support staff need training that gives them the knowledge and skills to provide effective peer support to people in emotional crisis. Peer-run respites need to provide training that ensures consistency in the quality of peer support.

**Work Group Consensus on Sobriety and Substance Use:**

- In order to create and maintain a safe, healing environment that supports wellness and recovery for the respite community as a whole, the presence and use of alcohol and illegal substances is not allowed on the premises of the respite home.
- The peer principles and values of choice, self-direction, self-determination and mutuality mean that there is no attempt to monitor or control what guests do off premises, including the use of alcohol and other substances.
- When substance use by one guest negatively impacts another guest, peer staff will work to remove the negative impact. For example, if a guest smelled of alcohol, solutions like mouthwash, showering and changing clothes would be suggested; if a person appeared intoxicated, they might be asked to remain in their room.

