



## Peer-Run Crisis Respite (PRCRs) – Fact Sheet

**PRCRs work in other states.** Currently, eleven in the United States: New Hampshire, Maine, Georgia, Ohio, Nebraska, Alaska, New York state (2), and West Virginia (3). In 2011, Massachusetts will create two new PRCRs.

**Need for crisis alternatives is growing.** Clinical professionals, taxpayers, and mental health consumers agree that there is a great need for alternatives to emergency rooms and mental hospitalization. Promoting recovery and resiliency is a good use of public money. Current crisis services tend to be traumatic, unintentionally encourage feelings of powerlessness and dependency, and are also very expensive. Persons in crisis often feel traumatized by emergency rooms and mental hospitals. PRCRs are less traumatic, more supportive, and have better outcomes for recovery.

**Highly effective but less expensive.** On average PRCRs are 70 percent less expensive than hospitalization. When adding the costs of crisis teams, ambulances, and emergency rooms, the savings are even greater.

**Crisis is an opportunity of growth.** Crisis can mean despair and personal loss. Yet, some peers come back, from the inward journey that outwardly displays as mental health symptoms, with new strength and insight. What makes for a successful resolution to crisis? For many, it is peer support and personal connection. PRCRs restore hope. Peers regain hope through being with others who have gone through similar experiences and recovered.

**Support at an early stage.** PRCRs provide support at an early stage of crisis, without ever having to take away personal control. Peers as supporters can start the recovery process more quickly. The key is safe, supportive relationships. In mutually-trusting relationships the person regains a sense of personal control.

**Hospitals for mental illness interrupt connections.** The whole life a person had before hospitalization—friends, family, job, apartment, pets—can be lost in a few days. Rebuilding these connections after discharge can be difficult. PRCRs help people stay connected to their communities.

**Jobs for persons with disabilities.** Persons with psychiatric disabilities are often eager to work. They want to give back to society. Earning money and having a valued social role is good for self-esteem and mental health. PRCRs are run by peers and therefore employ people who may otherwise be on Social Security. Peers change from tax consumers to tax contributors.

**Complementary to hospitals.** PRCRs are one option among a menu of options, both an alternative—and *complementary to*—existing services. Some peers may still choose to go to the hospital, while, for others, PRCRs allow them to leave the hospital earlier than otherwise possible.