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# Evaluation Report: Maternal Mental Health Certified Peer Support Training Pilot Study

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## **The Measurement Group LLC**

Prepared for 2020 Mom, January 2020

Supported in part by Grant GA006224 from the New Venture Fund, hope & grace project

## introduction

# Purpose

2020 Mom works nationally to close gaps in maternal mental health (MMH) care through collaboration, identification of best practices, and advocacy.

Maternal mental health disorders impact up to 1 in 5 women, yet most never receive a diagnosis or treatment and support.

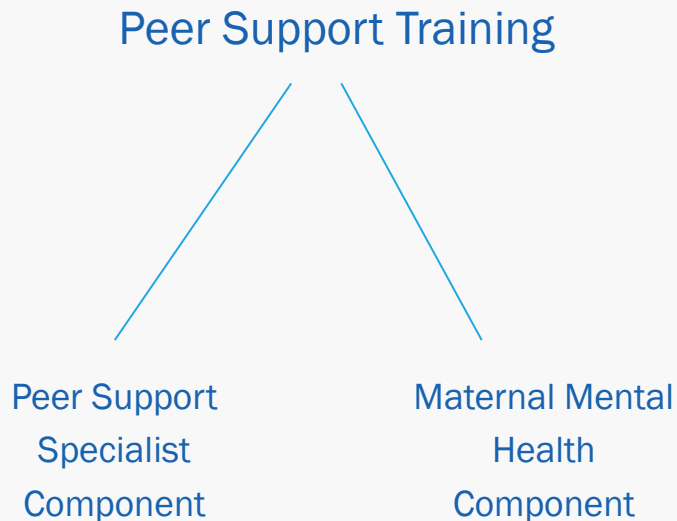
Certified peer support provided by trained peer specialists is a proven model for addressing mental health conditions.

Through a grant from the New Venture Fund, hope & grace project, 2020 Mom created a pilot program to identify ways in which established mental health peer specialist training could benefit the field of MMH. The pilot training was planned for 2 pilot staff members and 14 peers in Phoenix, Arizona and Houston, Texas – cities with high risk for maternal mental health disorders based on socioeconomic conditions. Following Hurricane Harvey, it was not possible to implement in Houston; a partner was found in Austin, Texas instead.

The pilot test involved collaboration with several community-based partners and the independent evaluation that formed the basis of this report. Through dissemination of the pilot findings, we hope to increase awareness of evidence based mental health peer support training and identify how it can be customized to meet the needs of mothers.

## Introduction

# About the Training



The Peer Support Training included two components: one focused on training paraprofessionals to be peer support specialists and another focused specifically on MMH issues

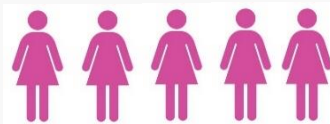
The Peer Support Specialist component was provided by Recovery Innovations (RI), a pioneer in Certified Peer Support Specialist Training. This training provided face-to-face live instruction on specific skills relevant to providing peer support in a behavioral health setting, as well as soft skills needed for the workplace. During the two-week training, Week 1 addressed personal development, while Week 2 focused on Stages of Change and addiction issues. Initially, this required participants to be on-site though a distance learning model was later implemented that allowed face-to-face interaction in real time.

The MMH-specific component was provided by Women's Health Innovations of Arizona, which was also responsible for the overall implementation of the pilot test. MMH training in Austin was provided by Via Hope. This content addressed specific conditions and struggles related to maternal mental health via role playing, strategies, and skills development.

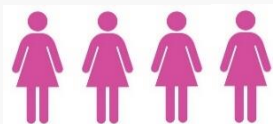
## Findings: Participant Survey

# The training increased knowledge and confidence to provide MMH support

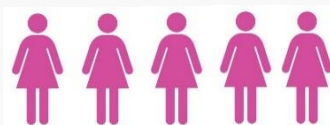
Increased knowledge of info from training



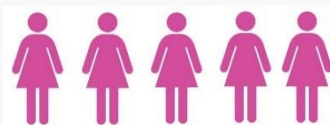
Increased knowledge about MMH



Increased confidence in ability to provide peer support to other women



Increased confidence to provide peer support specifically for MMH



**“I loved talking about how to talk with women [about] what to say and do and what not to say and do”**

**“The facilitator of course made information very clear for my understanding. The tools and statistics were very helpful and I gained more knowledge”**

## Findings: Participant Survey

# Post-training participant feedback

Satisfied



Very Satisfied



In addition to learning content, peers enjoyed networking opportunities

**“I learned so much about recovery in general and I made amazing friends in the process.”**

Some barriers and challenges were identified

**“Two weeks straight is a HUGE commitment. Perhaps have it spaced out over months.”**

**“...long days for a parent. I know it is a lot of information and it's great for momentum.”**

## Methods

# Peer and supervisor interviews

To learn more about the impact of the MMH Peer Support Training, participants were invited to participate in a semi-structured telephone interview. For peers working in some capacity as a peer specialist in MMH, their work supervisors were also interviewed. A total of nine women participated in the interviews.

Qualitative (descriptive) data from the interviews were cataloged using NVivo software. Major themes were coded and analyzed by the evaluation study team.

Data were examined in terms of major themes, as well as successes, challenges, and lessons learned from the pilot test.

## Findings: Interviews

# Peers found the training useful

**“Got a lot out of each part...Learned how to phrase questions and not put ideas into other people's heads. Did role playing with open-ended questions that wouldn't lead to just a yes or no.”**

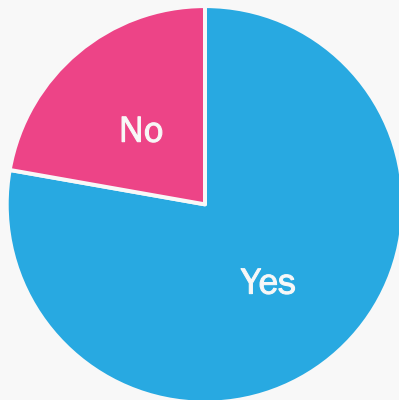
**“...I gained people skills, strategic guidelines, listening and support skills. I use these skills even with my 6-year-old at home.”**

**“Incredibly useful – [I] gained firsthand knowledge, especially [from an] implementation and policy standpoint.”**

## Findings: Interviews

# Training had an impact on peer support in maternal mental health services

Did MMH-Related Work Since Training



# 100%

of those working in MMH used information from the training in their work

**“I learned how to conversate with clients, and utilize these skills on a weekly basis when communicating with clients regarding maternal mental health”**



## Findings: Interviews

# The training helped peer support specialists in their work and beyond

### Empathy & Compassion

**“During the training there was a wheel that was used as an example. The wheel had a huge impact, there were a lot of key aspects that go across the board in all kinds of relationships. I learned to be a pro-active listener with empathy and have even applied things to my marriage.”**

### Communication Skills

**“For sure, [I have] especially [used information about] how to ask questions, engaging with clients and learning how to not give advice without permission and really talking things through.”**

### MMH Content

**“The [MMH] training was very helpful...I use it with various friends who are struggling with postpartum depression. [I] learned how to be openly encouraging, referring them to get help and recognizing when they are struggling with challenges.”**

## Findings: Interviews

# Challenges related to working as peer specialist in maternal mental health

### Need for Ongoing Support

**56%**

would like more support to use what they learned about maternal mental health

Support includes clinical support as well as ongoing training on providing peer support services in maternal mental health

### Lack of Clear Professional Path

“It would be helpful to have a clear path for people wanting to do this kind of work moving forward. A lot were frustrated after the training - like they learned so much but now what?”

“What to do after the training was not clear.”

## Findings: Interviews

# Challenges related to the training itself

### MMH Peers in General Peer Support Training

**“I got more out of consolidated one-day maternal mental health training than the spread-out two-week peer support training. MMH training was more focused and also had three other peers – felt like a team together, could discuss maternal mental health struggles/issues. The peer support training was more a recovery environment.”**

### Environment Sensitive to Needs of New Moms

- Family responsibilities
  - Childcare and other
- MMH a uniquely women’s issue
- General recovery audience may not be sensitive to MMH issues
- MMH peers may not feel understood or supported
- Disclosures: childbirth, medical, interpersonal

### In Person vs. Distance Learning

**“[I] was able to be in session for all dates. It was super helpful, since others were not able to and attended remotely. [I] was sitting there texting them, [I] was able to attend to their questions and concerns in real time. Recommend having an on-site advocate/ representative for remote learners.”**

## Findings: Interviews

# Participant Recommendations

### Resources and networking

**“...Connect "all of us" through private Facebook group, give list of conferences, phone numbers, lobbying efforts, resources under the big umbrella. Identify advocates since it a movement... [info about] paid or volunteer positions.”**

**“Add in a social media component using Facebook and Instagram to network.”**

### Future MMH trainings women only

**“...[in the general training] trainees included men, besides the moms... when peer support trainers did try and bring up MMH, it was disturbing to men and they couldn't relate. Didn't feel supported at this time – the facilitator was great, but the other participants made it hard to connect.”**

## Next Steps

# MMH peer support training pilot study: Take-away messages

This pilot test showed promise for the application of evidence based behavioral health peer support specialist training to maternal mental health.

Many participants suggested that it would be beneficial to integrate the MMH training components into the general peer support training.

Future efforts should ensure that trainings are maternally-centered and have built-in accommodations for mothers with young children.

**Programs that utilize peer support workers in MMH should plan to have adequate supports in place such as clinical supervision and booster trainings.**

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## Report prepared for



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