

Capacity Building: An Overview for Family and Youth Peer Programs and Organizations Part 2: Video 1



Thank you for viewing this video in our series on organizational growth. We are sharing this information on capacity building to support the growing demand for peer support services and to support the key practices for organizational peer program expansion.

My name is Rebecca Evansky, I am the Executive director of the Wellness Collaborative of New York, Independent Practice Association. The WCNY IPA is a collective of peer led organizations from across New York State that leverage their expertise and share best practices, support executive operations and advance the awareness and effectiveness of peer support.

This training and all materials are products created in partnership with the NYS Office of Mental Health Under the NYS System of Care Project and is intended to support the growth of family and youth peer led programs across New York State.

Introduction

This series provides an overview of program and organizational growth and sustainability practices for family and youth peer programs and organizations.

In this video, we will provide an overview of capacity building core concepts and building strategic relationships.

Additional resource documents and videos related to grant writing and funding, collaboration and sustainability key practices are available in this series.

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Agenda

- Overview of Capacity Building
- Mission, Vision and Strategy
- Strategic Relationships
- Program and Delivery Impact
- Operations and Management
- Governance, Leadership, and Finance

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Our agenda for this video is to review the high-level components of capacity building that will contribute to sustainable funding and growth for family and youth peer programs. We will review the core components of operations and management and how your mission, vision and strategy contribute to successful operations of family and youth peer led programs.

Capacity Building 101

Capacity Building refers to the activities that strengthen an organization and help to fulfill the mission and goals.

Activities can include:

- Strategic Planning
- Technology Improvements
- Operational Practice Enhancements
- Board Development

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Maintaining the peer voice while advancing the mission of the organization in parallel with building out your peer program will at some point include capacity building activities. This is defined by the things you do to strengthen your family and youth led peer program to fulfill the mission and goals of your program or organization.

Activities include things like strategic planning, technology improvements, strengthening operational practices and board development. Over the course of this video, we will review six key components as described in a great resource written by Paul Connolly and Carol Lukas, Authors of the book. Strengthening Nonprofit Performance: A Funder's Guide to Capacity Building.

Capacity Building: Six Components

- Mission, Vision and Strategy
- Strategic Relationships
- Program and Delivery Impact
- Operations and Management
- Governance and Leadership
- Finance



(Connolly & Lukas, 2002)

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Paul Connolly and Carol Lukas, Authors of the book *Strengthening Nonprofit Performance: A Funder's Guide to Capacity Building*, outline a model that describes the interdependent factors that contribute to the health and performance of a nonprofit organization.

When you consider the overall capacity of an organization and these components, remember that they are also impacted by the external environment or community in which your organization exists.

We will briefly review these components as they pertain to family and youth peer led programs and will consider the family and youth peer program that is housed within a greater non profit or clinical model and how these can be initiated. Capacity building can be considered before you write any application for funding, if you are just starting out with an idea to grow your peer program. It can also be considered after you receive your funding and are hoping to build out a team.

Capacity Building: Mission, Vision and Strategy

- Be clear on your organization's mission and vision
- Have a vision of what family and youth peer programs provide as an independent agency or as part of a larger organization
- Conduct an analysis to gauge readiness for strategy



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When you are initially considering capacity building exercises within your family and youth peer program, you want to be able to define and have clarity around your mission, vision, and values. They are considered the cornerstones of an organization. They define your purpose, your goals, and your guiding principles. Then, how you translate your ideas into a concrete plan for action is where a strategy comes in play.

- Vision is defined as the larger picture of what you want to achieve.
- Mission is the general statement of how you will achieve the vision.
- Strategy is the art of devising or employing plans toward a goal.

Your capacity building activities may vary if you are a stand alone family or youth peer led organization or if you are a peer project as part of a larger organization. With either structure you can conduct a strategic planning process to plan for the future of the program.

Strategic planning is the actual process that can help you define the mission, vision, and values. Going through a comprehensive analysis of the services you provide, every few years is an essential step for any organization that strives to succeed at achieving its goals. It's a way of thinking about the future and making sure that your

organization is well-positioned to meet the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

One way to do this is utilizing a SWOT Analysis, SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths outline what you do better or more uniquely as a family and youth peer provider over other types of support providers. Weaknesses will describe what your organization needs to improve on. Opportunities include a list of places or programs that family and youth peer support should be connected with. And threats are the things you consider are being provided that will lower or end the need for family and youth peer support.

You conduct a SWOT or other analysis as part of a strategic plan to help an organization align its mission, vision, and values. At the end of planning, you would have a clear understanding of possible opportunities for where you can utilize funding, should you consider grants and it will help to identify your strengths in providing family and youth peer support. YOU CAN FIND LINKS TO MORE INFORMATION ON SWOT ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE RESOURCE HANDOUTS FOR THIS SERIES

Capacity Building: Strategic Relationships



- Why do I need them?
- Identify the goal of the relationship
- Investments for future sustainability
- Mutual respect for roles
- Communication is key

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When you are building capacity for an organization, you might consider strategic relationships. Maybe you think that all your organizational partnerships are meaningful and fulfilling already. You may already partner on regional projects or task forces to accomplish a particular initiative.

Strategic relationships go beyond your current project partnerships. They are new and include other partners that exist in your community, providing support or services to family and youth.

Any other social health organization that a family or youth may access should be considered a strategic partner. Examples include community physical health providers, faith based communities, libraries, food pantries, outreach organizations like community action or salvation army, educational based services including early intervention agencies, mobile crisis, family planning organizations, HeadStart, career centers, after school community centers and many more.

Determine what you have to offer an organization and why you would approach them to build a relationship. One reason is to increase connection to a new collaborator that is seeing individuals who might need family or youth peer support.

Consider what you have to offer the relationship and what your ask of that person or organization may be (in the here and now or in the future).

Another reason is to build a connection for a funding application. Funding applications many times will require letters of support from collaborators. Identifying the goals upfront will help to support your ask of the organization.

Your investment in the relationship should include a healthy respect for each role and organization. Consider this a thinktank at the dinner table vs silos out in the field. Attend any invitations to join community conversations, connect with outreach teams, mobile response programs, educational institutions, clinical providers, and others who might be connecting family and youth with any physical, mental health or other social health needs.

As is the case with personal relationships, professional relationships need to be nurtured if you want them to last well into the future. Being generous with your time, energy and willingness to help the other party will encourage them to do the same for you.

That doesn't mean you have to invest a ton of time into every relationship. But check in periodically. Offer congratulations and celebrate their successes. Ask organizations and peer professionals about things you know are important to them or programs that you heard are having success. Express gratitude if they make a community connection for you or send families and youth to you for peer support.

Capacity Building: Program and Delivery Impact



- Refer to stakeholders
- Communicate the plan
- Review and revise, as needed
- Monitor progress
- Consider opportunities for additional collaborations and funding sources

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Capacity building for family and youth peer led programs include an evaluation of your current programs and the impact those programs have on the individuals you serve - Are they being utilized to their capacity? or Do they need more promotion and referrals from the community and other stakeholder?

Consider the programs that are impacted by those you support as stakeholders - the community agencies who rely on you to support and guide individuals they refer to you. Think of these agencies as your invested partners, many times they are organizational leaders who you have collaborative relationships with currently.

Referring to your stakeholders and fellow peers will inform and help assess your current program success in offering youth and family peer support. An example of how to gain input from stakeholders may include forming an advisory board or members who utilize family and youth peer support or regional feedback forums.

- With this information, you can start a plan for the things that need adjusting, additional funding or new programs or collaborations you wish to have.
- Communicate your plan effectively. Once you have developed your strategic

plan, it's important to communicate it effectively to all stakeholders. This will help everyone understand the plan and their role in implementing it.

- Monitor your progress regularly. It's important to monitor your progress regularly and make adjustments to your plan as needed. This will help you ensure that you are on track to achieving your goals.

Capacity Building: Operations and Management

- Defer to the experts: Nothing about us without us
- Identify needs and budget: Collect data along the way
- Match the requests to your mission
- Consider this an ongoing process



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Capacity planning determines the services needed by an organization and how they meet changing demands for services. One purpose of capacity planning for your organization would be to ensure that the necessary family and youth peer resources are available when they are requested.

It's also possible you will see an increase in requests with the newly available billable peer models, the interest in providing family and youth peer support in a variety of settings and in the increased awareness of what family and youth peer support can offer individuals in need.

You may find that organizations, schools, clinics and other settings will be deferring to you as the experts. Embrace that role and offer support when possible. Within your internal operations, have a plan for increased requests for support or need in the community. If you can not manage the increase in requests, know who your go-to family and youth peer support organizations are across NYS or be prepared to offer national websites and information. Be the relevant source of good information.

Capacity building includes knowing what it will cost to provide family and youth peer support, if you can meet the demand. Be prepared by counting data on calls,

outreach and requests. Consider the question of how much you would need to increase your peer workforce to meet the needs.

Consider the places family and youth peer support can be offered or are being requested and “interview” the possible sites to ensure they meet the mission and vision of family and youth peer support. This also ensures that family and youth peers have the relevant experience to meet the needs and requests.

Capacity building is something that family and youth peer led program leaders should be considering ongoing by collecting information from organizations who can possibly benefit from being connected to a peer. It includes documenting the request for peer support, even if you can’t meet the need.

Capacity Building: Governance, Leadership and Finance



- Governance and leadership guide all decisions
- Develop relationships with leadership and share successes of family and youth peer programs
- Communicate needs to ensure fiscal support is considered for future decision making

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When an organization is considering capacity building, we must acknowledge that leadership and governance systems are at the heart of decision-making. They will include a finance leader or team that guides how resources are used at the organization. Leadership forms the foundation of how a vision of family and youth peer led programs are translated into reality. Those who are directing peer program operations should have a connection to organizational leadership. In family and youth peer led programs, this may be a role that is covered by one individual, in larger organizations it could be a peer connecting regularly to a non-peer organization leader.

In governance processes, the attitudes and behaviors of decision-makers and professional staff, whether conscious or unconscious, are important. Training and education of existing organization personnel on family and youth peer led models and support can help strengthen capacity to better understand, integrate and address the needs of those seeking support or referring individuals.

Develop a relationship with internal leadership through training and education, communicate your peer program goals and vision and share regular successes with the executive leadership team. This will also build independence with the family and

youth peer program team and allow the program to advance the mission and authenticity of peer support. You can do this by offering to present to board members and other organization staff in operations meetings.

Implementing program-based budgets, maintaining program data and outreach, and sharing at minimum quarterly will position your family and youth peer support programs to make more educated decisions about how funds are utilized and what is needed.

Greater engagement will also open more opportunities for fiscal support when grant opportunities are available, as well as opportunities to brainstorm additional program needs.

Capacity Building Summary

- Capacity building activities will strengthen your family and youth peer program to help fulfill the mission and goals.
- Strategic planning will help to determine the vision and action items needed to build out your family and youth peer network.
- Strategic relationships are mutually beneficial to enhance your program.



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When considering capacity building - these initiatives are the things that will strengthen your overall organization and prepare you for predicting future needs and filling gaps with family and peer led program services. Family and youth peer advocates will continue to be in demand as needs are identified by health and human service providers and more collaborative relationships are built over time. Capacity building will help you fulfill the mission and goals of your program - whether you are a stand alone peer provider agency or if you are part of a larger organization..

Strategic planning are the more specific activities that help to identify the action items to achieve your goals - especially have clear pathways to the things that will increase programs, collaboration opportunities and peer workforce or training needs.

Strategic relationships both internally with program and organization executives and leadership will help with understanding the model and mission of family and youth peer programs. Externally, the collaborations with community based providers and other human service agencies will help to expand your network that will potentially support future funding opportunities.

More Information

Check out additional videos and handouts from this series on www.peertac.org.

Email us at info@peertac.org with any questions.

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<https://wcnypa.com>

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This video reviewed the six components of organizational capacity building according to Connolly and Lukas, Authors of the book *Strengthening Nonprofit Performance: A Funder's Guide to Capacity Building* and included considerations for family and youth peer programs within a larger organization.

Please see the other videos and handouts in this series for more information on organizational growth and capacity building.

Thank you for listening to our series. Questions can be emailed to info@peertac.org.

Resources

- Connolly, P., & Lukas, C. A. (2002). *Strengthening Nonprofit Performance: A Funder's Guide to Capacity Building*. Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.
- Harvard Business Review: Strategic Planning: <https://hbr.org/topic/strategic-planning>
- Johnson, J. (2003, July 3). *Strengthening Nonprofit Performance: A Funder's Guide to Capacity Building | Book Reviews | features | PND*. philanthropynewsdigest.org. <https://philanthropynewsdigest.org/features/book-reviews/strengthening-nonprofit-performance>

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The following resources were utilized in this presentation