

Clinician and Staff Peer Support Program

Clinicians and staff come to work every day to provide the best care for their patients. When things go wrong, they can be left feeling isolated, depressed and anxious. Research shows that support from a peer who has had a similar experience can help.

The Betsy Lehman Center is working with health systems across the state to develop peer support programs to help care providers cope after these difficult events.

WHAT IS A PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM?

An organization-based program recruits clinical and non-clinical staff to be trained as volunteer peer supporters. They help validate the feelings of their colleagues and serve as an ongoing “check-in” point for clinicians and staff that need additional help. Support is offered, but never imposed and communications are kept confidential.

The Betsy Lehman Center has developed a model for this work that can be adapted to the unique needs of each organization.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Organizations that offer peer support programs not only provide essential aid to those in need, but they also convey the important message that safety is an institutional priority. By working with the Center to implement peer support, you will gain:

- An established, peer-led program of support for clinicians and staff affected by medical error or unexpected patient outcomes
- Reduced stress and “burn out” among staff coping with the aftermath of an adverse event
- A more supportive culture that promotes peer-to-peer interactions and a patient safety mindset

HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

If you have questions about peer support or are interested in developing a program at your institution, please email Jacqueline Ewuoso at Jacqueline.Ewuoso@BetsyLehmanCenterMA.gov or call 617-645-3116.

PROGRAM DETAILS

The Betsy Lehman Center offers:

- Assistance creating a team to oversee program development and implementation
- Onsite or virtual training of new peer supporters by an experienced faculty member
- Post-training and implementation support as needed, including ongoing opportunities to consult with faculty
- A learning community across the state with other health care institutions that have peer support programs

Organizations commit to:

- Obtain formal endorsement from leadership for the goals of the program
- Make a project manager or coordinator available for at least 0.25FTE to oversee the deliverables of the program
- Convene monthly meetings of a multi-disciplinary team to champion and oversee implementation of the program