

# IL-NET

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**IL-NET National Training and Technical Assistance Center for Independent Living**

# Peer Support

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**Part of our series for New CIL and SILC Staff Members**

## Presenters:

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## IL-NET Partners

Today's presentation is brought to you by the Administration for Community Living at the US Department of Health and Human Services in conjunction with the IL-NET. The IL-NET is operated by ILRU and collaborates with NCIL, APRIL, the University of Montana, and a consultant network of subject-matter experts. The IL-NET T&TA Center provides training and technical assistance to centers for independent living, statewide independent living councils, and designated state entities.



Image Descriptions: Logos of Independent Living Research Utilization, Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living, National Council on Independent Living, and University of Montana.

## What You Will Learn Today

- Peer Supporters serve as role models, as only someone with personal experience with disabilities can do.
- They share life experiences and bring new ideas and information to facilitate independence.

## What You Will Learn Today

- You will learn about the importance of peer support within a Center for Independent Living.
- You will learn why your disability qualifies you to provide peer support.
- You will learn practical and varied ways to provide peer support to consumers.
- You will learn how this call and others provide peer support to you at a national level.

# What Is Peer Support?

- Who is your peer in the disability community?
- A peer may have the same disability, but that is not a requirement!
- Because more than half of CIL staff must be people with disabilities, staff are peers both to each other and to consumers.
- The CIL should clearly be a place full of people with disabilities.
- Some “groups” (youth, job seekers, mental health, etc.) may meet at your center, but they are not the only model of peer support.

# Peer Support is the Heart of IL

- As a disability-led organization– it's a natural. This is our community.
- Peer Supporters serve as role models, as only someone with personal experience with disabilities can do.
- They share life experiences and bring new ideas and information to facilitate independence.
- They work one-on-one, in small groups, and hold regular monthly Peer Support Groups for those interested in person or online.
- Peer support assists consumers with overcoming trauma related to ableism and discrimination.

# 9 Peer Support Is Not

- Peer support is not therapy or counseling. A peer supporter should not offer advice that a therapist or counselor might offer.
- A friendship. A peer supporter should be friendly, but peer support should be focused on sharing experiences and working on goals to improve and empower.

# Think About Language

## For example, recruiting youth-

Equip knows better. We're an organization of young adult leaders guiding kids with every type of disability in finding their *a-ha moment*. The instant when they take the lead in their lives, find their unique voice to self-advocate, and engage with their community of peers more fully. It's in that moment they find true self-empowerment and begin the journey toward their greatest potential.

We know this because we've been there.

# Youth Language

We see you. The real you. The you behind what others see as your disability. The kid who never asked to be treated as special or inspirational, certainly not as helpless. The one entirely capable of handling the minute tasks of every day and also creating a roadmap toward great things tomorrow.

We understand what it means to *do life just a little differently*.

We understand, because we've been there. As young adults with disabilities ourselves, we'll help you take the lead on your life and find your voice. And within this community of peers, you can turn your disability into your moment of truth.

We've got you. Your community is waiting.

# Youth Language

Meet them where they are— hangouts (youth peer support) can take place anywhere-

- Virtual hangouts
- In-person hangouts
- Discord Groups
- 1-on-1 sessions
- Social skills group



# Adult Peer Support – Empower Hour

- Online, in-person, and one on one
- Meet them where they are

## **Topics (led by consumers):**

- Adjustment to disability
- Pain management
- Gaining independence
- Medical advocacy
- Navigating barriers
- Advocating – individual and systems

## **Definition of Peer Support (Peer Counseling)**

**Peer support (counseling) is a core service:**

1. All centers must provide it
2. Most CILs don't use the term "counseling" found in the Rehabilitation Act because their state has specific requirements for anyone using that term "counseling" or "counselor"

**Peer support is an element of IL philosophy:**

1. Centers for Independent Living are run by people with disabilities - preferably significant ones - serving people with significant disabilities.
2. We are in this together as a community.

## Questions & Discussion

**What are you curious about?**

**What needs clarification or more explanation?**

**Let's turn off the recording device and discuss what you want to know!**

**This part is not recorded. If you are still reluctant to ask questions or make comments out loud, you can comment in the evaluation that is found at the end of the presentation.**

## Resources for further study

- <https://www.ilru.org/building-effective-peer-support-program-online-course-manual>
- On-line course for all core services including Peer Support  
<https://www.ilru.org/training/core-services-for-centers-for-independent-living-series>

## Evaluation Survey

Your feedback on this webinar is important to us. At the end of the presentation, you will have the opportunity to complete a brief evaluation survey.

**Evaluation Link:** [https://uthtmc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_eV5kkZgbceKCr2e](https://uthtmc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eV5kkZgbceKCr2e)



## Contact Information

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