



### **Peer Support: Why it Works**

Introduction: Peer Specialists are persons with mental health conditions who have completed specific training that enables them to enhance a person's wellness and recovery by providing peer support. Peer Specialists work in a variety of locations, such as peer support centers, crisis stabilization units, respite programs, psychosocial rehabilitation programs, and in psychiatric hospitals. Peer support can be a one-on-one experience or a group of people sharing together. In a groundbreaking letter to Medicaid directors in 2007, Dennis G. Smith, director of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, explained peer support as an "evidence-based mental health model of care that consists of a qualified peer support provider who assists individuals with their recovery from mental illness and substance use disorders."

The following abstracts summarize some of this research on the effectiveness of peer support. For more information on these citations or on the issue of violence and people with mental health diagnoses, contact [media@ncmhr.org](mailto:media@ncmhr.org).

Bergeson, S. (n.d.) Cost effectiveness of using peer providers. Retrieved from:  
<http://bit.ly/1lbypF7>