



LIVE & LEARN

Peer Support:
Leveraging lived experience into cultures of
wellness

Laysha Ostrow, PhD

November 17, 2016

Carter Center Symposium



“Disclosure”

January 15, 2004

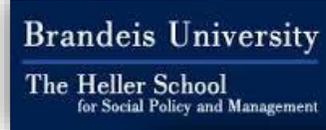
To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Laysha Ostrow who has been in treatment with me since March of 2004. She is on multiple medications to manage DSM IV diagnoses of bipolar disorder and anxiety NOS. It is my psychiatric opinion that Laysha is currently unable to support herself via full time employment. She is unlikely to do so for the foreseeable future. Please contact me if you require additional information.

Sincerely,



, MD



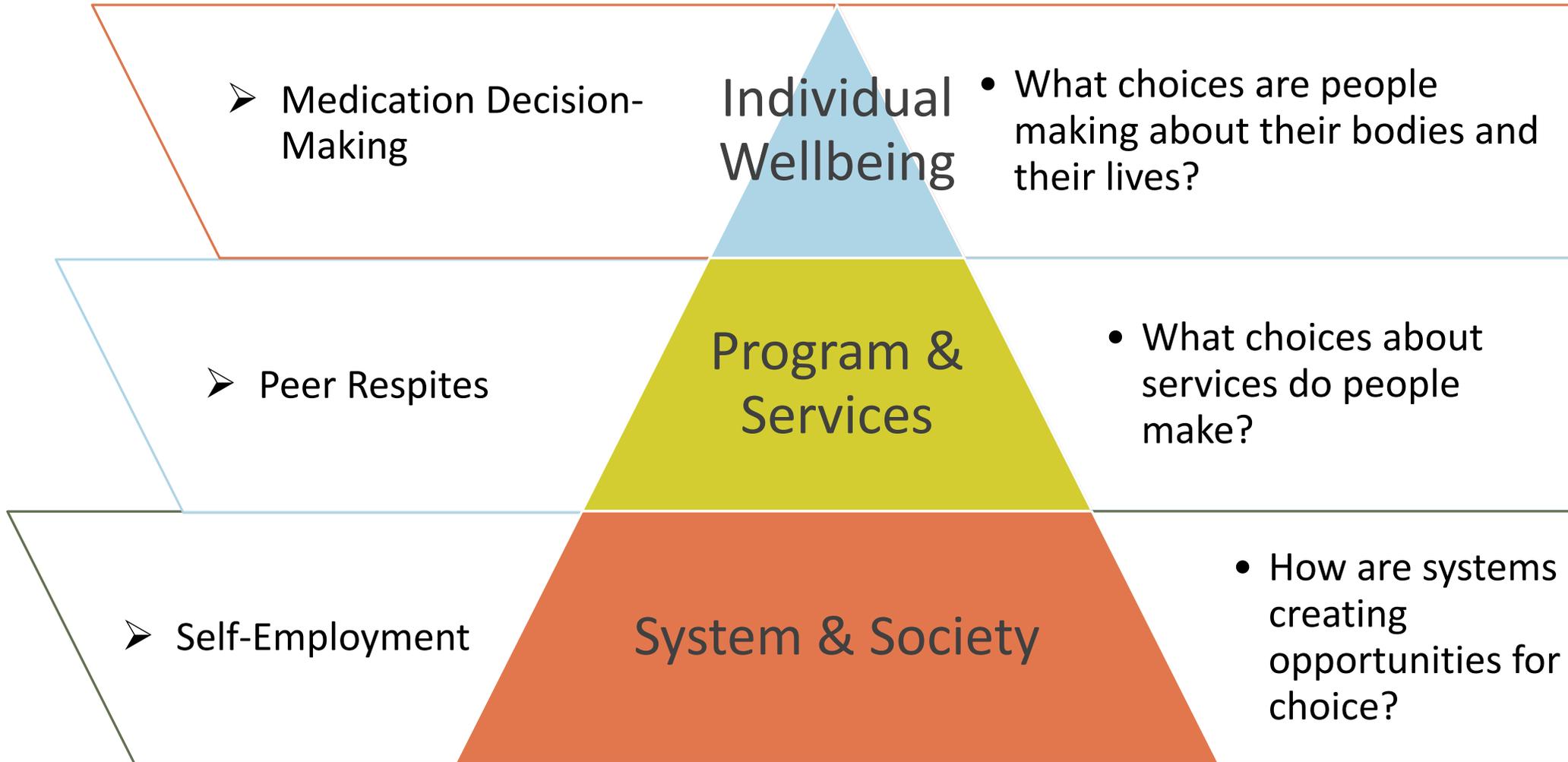


Suspend your disbelief...

Outline

- I. Context: What is Peer Support? What is a Culture of Wellness?
- II. Explore Peer Support and Wellness Culture through Example Topics
- III. Discussion

The Impact of Peer Support on Choice



Peer Support

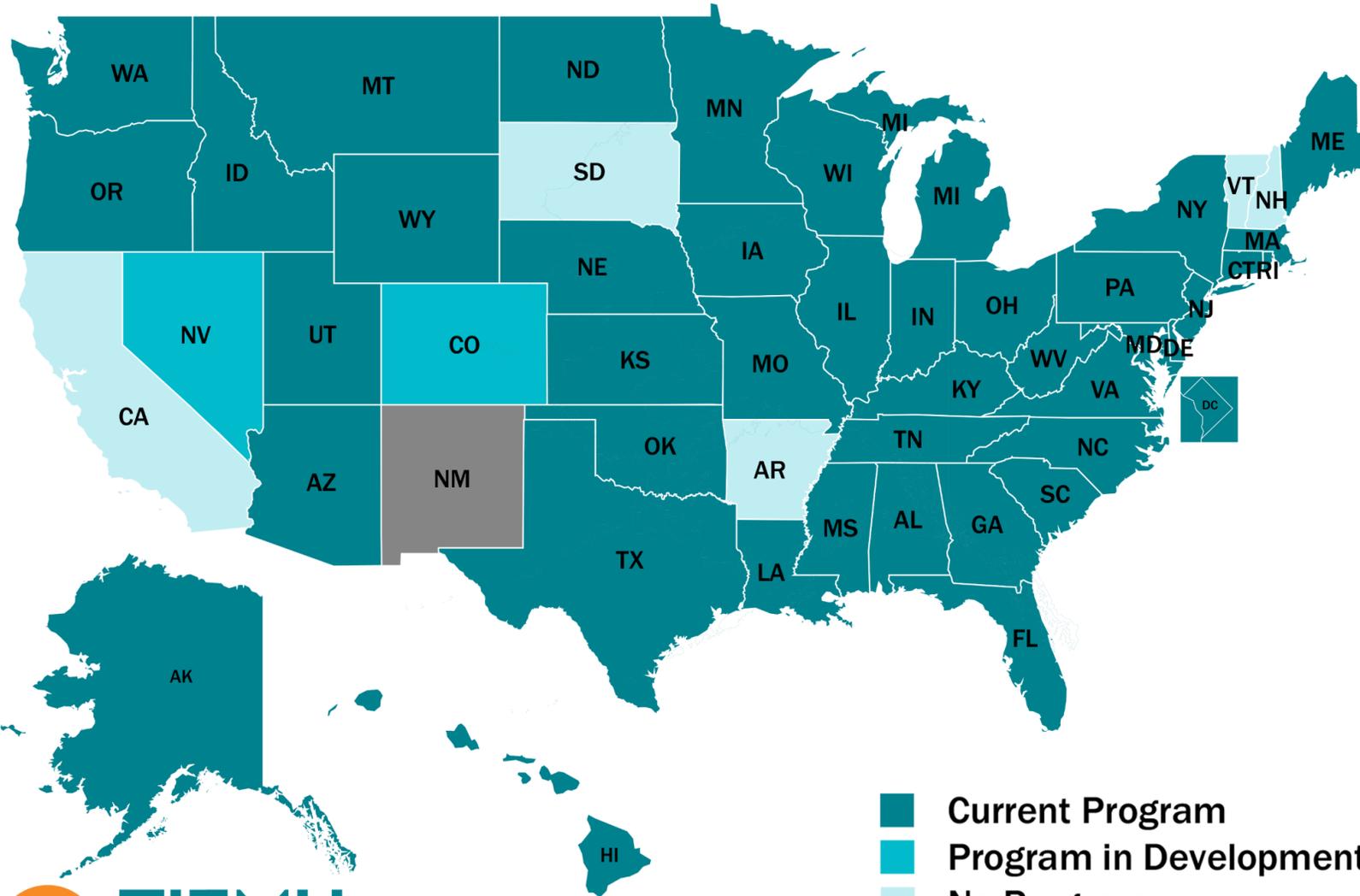


People with lived experience creating mutual relationships based on respect, shared responsibility, and agreement of what is helpful



Increasing attention nationally and locally on implementing, evaluating, and regulating peer support practices

Map of Existing Peer Specialist Training and Certification Programs



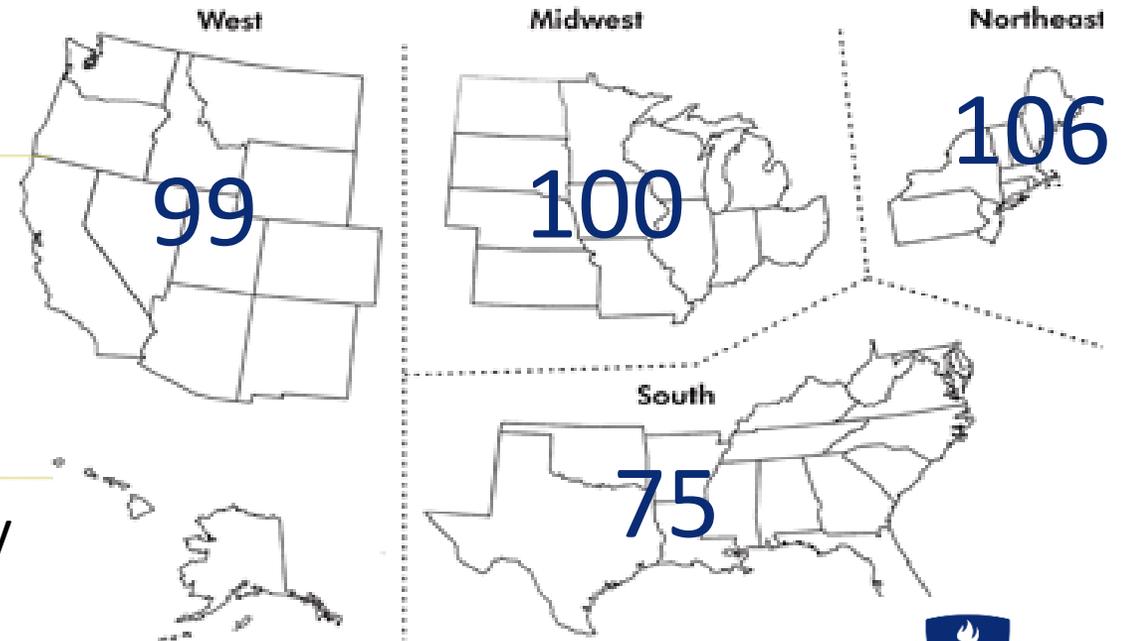
- Current Program
- Program in Development
- No Program
- * New Mexico not Included

Peer-Run Organizations (2012)

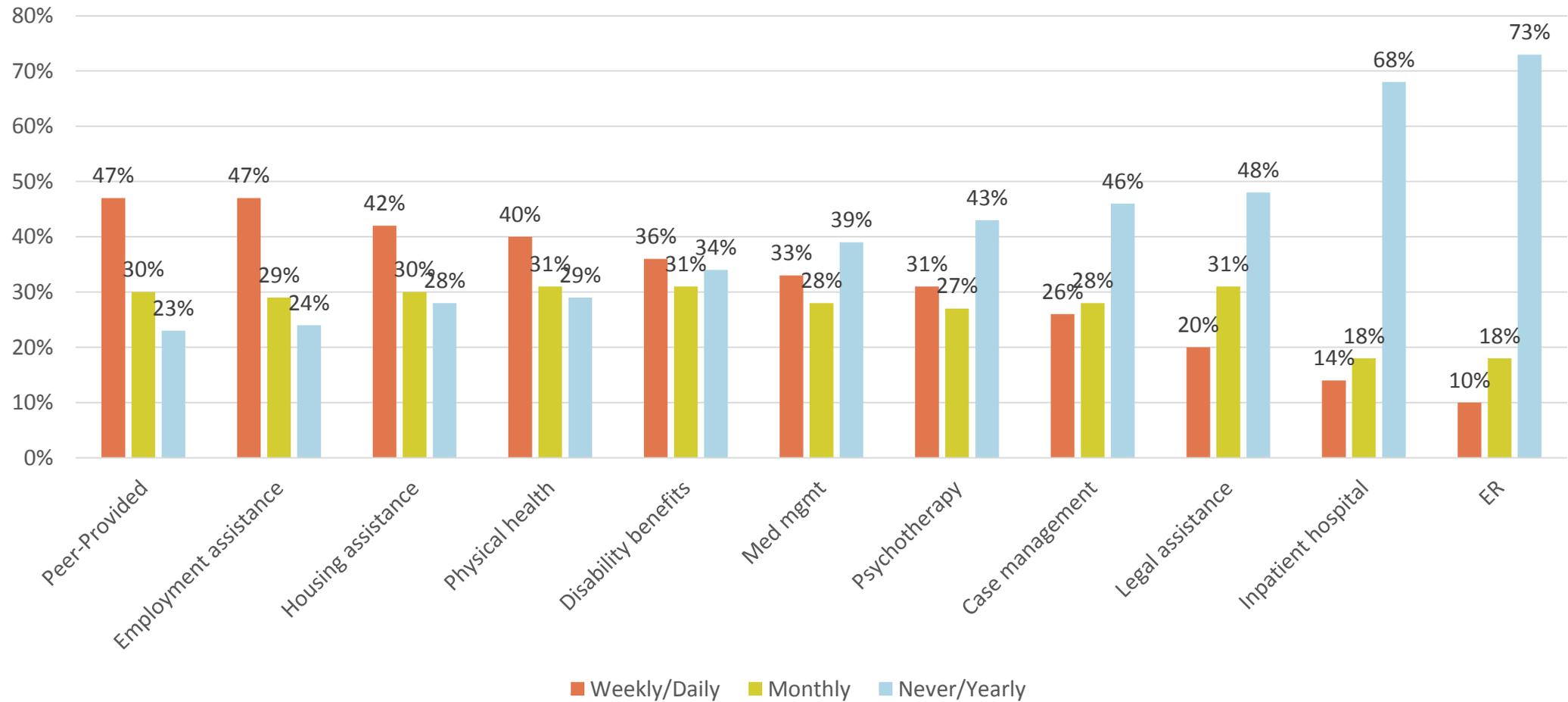
Non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations or programs in 48 states & DC

Controlled and staffed by people with lived experience (consumers/survivors/peers, service users)

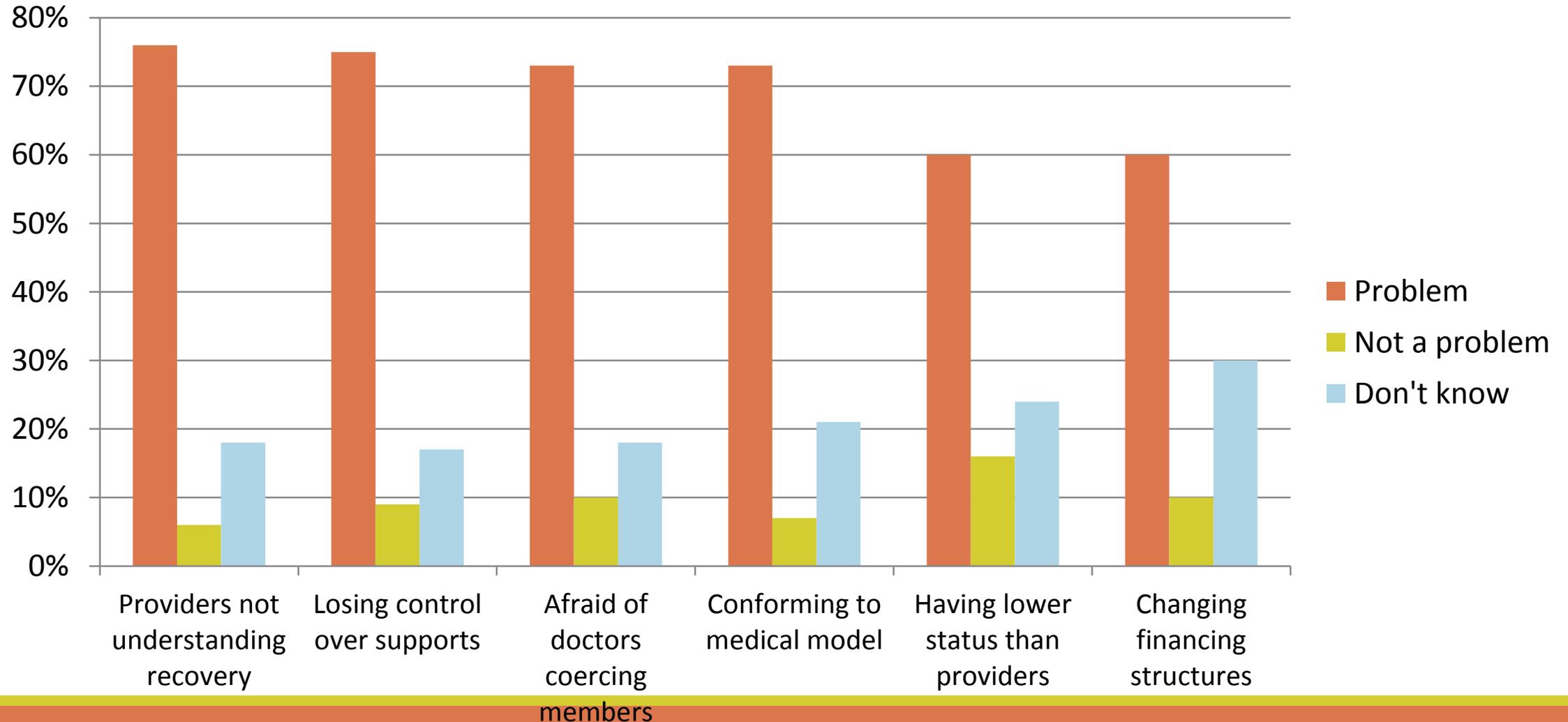
Mission is to use peer support and advocacy to promote community-building and empowerment for members (service users)



Suggesting Services to Members



Integrated care settings (“health homes”)



How does peer support work?

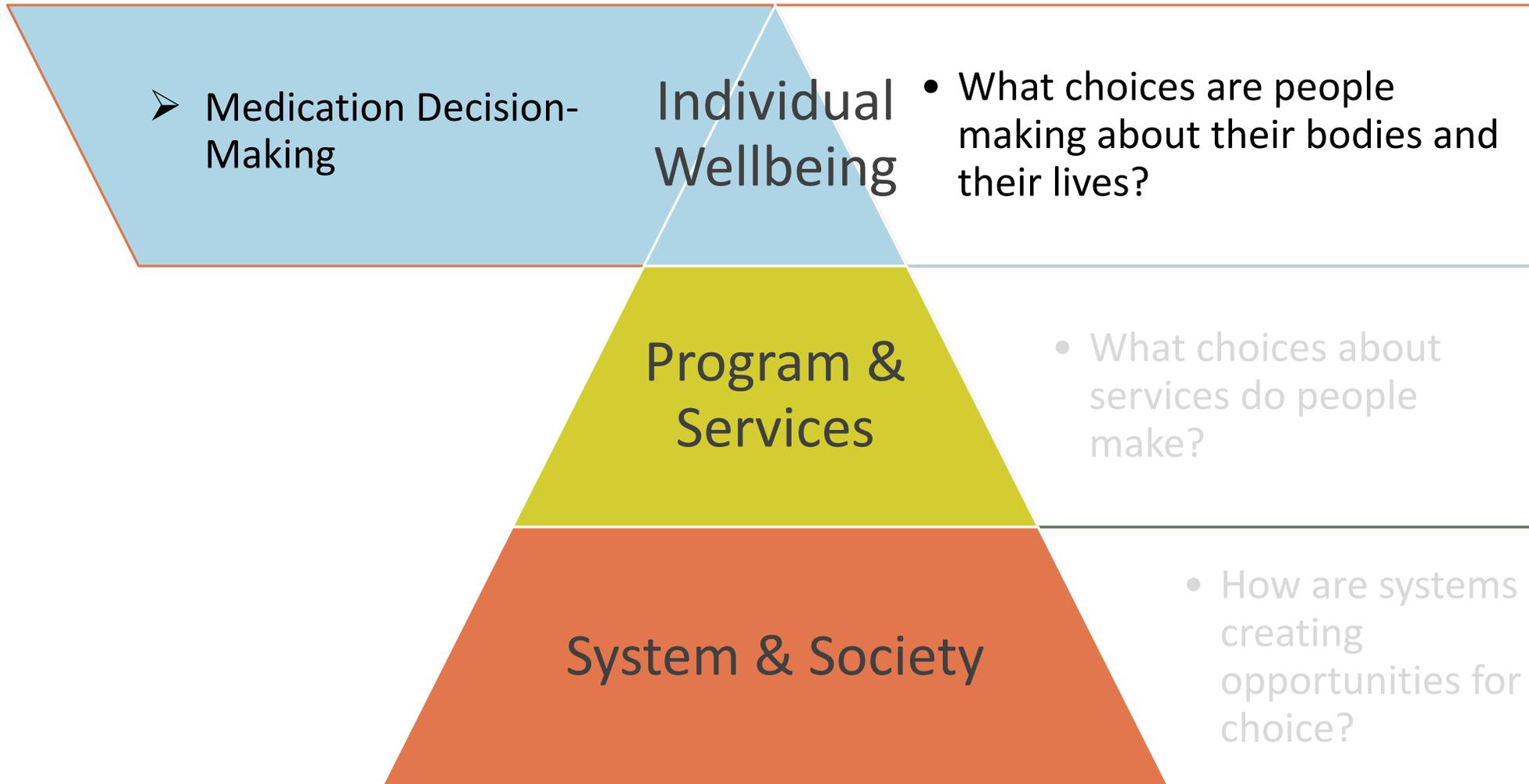
Beneficial in reducing hospitalizations, and promoting recovery outcomes such as community tenure, empowerment, and self-efficacy

Orientation toward social justice makes peer support unique:

- 92% of peer-run organizations engage in advocacy in addition to peer support
 - Less hierarchical peer-run organizations are more effective
-

New policies to certify and reimburse peer specialists may risk the foundation of peer support in social justice advocacy and mutuality

The Impact of Peer Support on Choice



Psychiatric Medication Discontinuation/Reduction Study

- Sometimes people who take psychiatric medications choose to stop taking it
- When people choose to stop medications, they may struggle to find the information or support they need
- Providers who want to help often lack evidence to guide people



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Expect Recovery

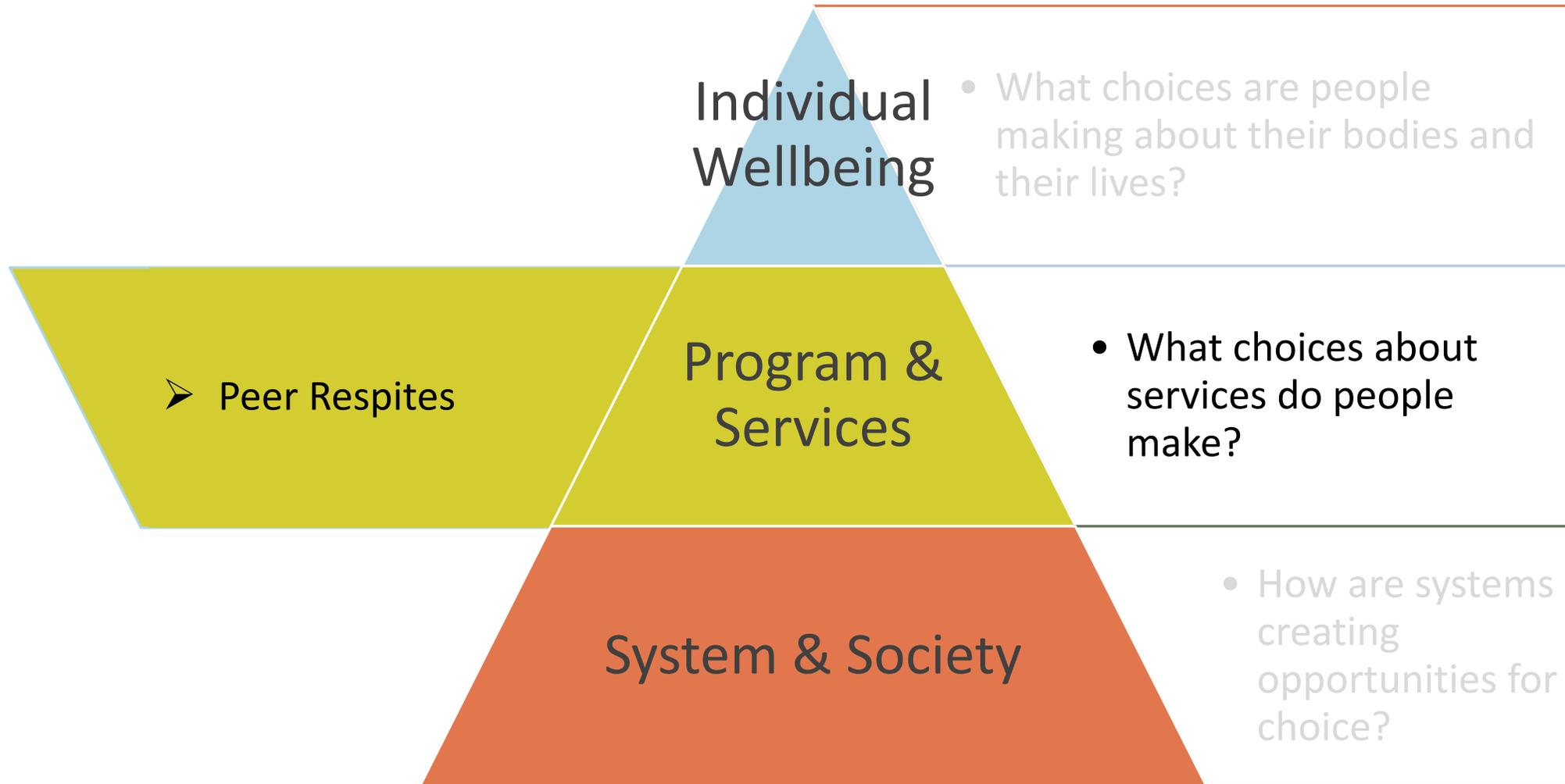
Study team consisted of researchers, practitioners, and activists with lived experience of D/R and of supporting others in D/R

What helps or prevents people from stopping their psychiatric medications?

U.S. adults who met the following criteria:

- Lifetime psychiatric diagnosis
- Took prescribed psychiatric medications for at least nine months before trying to discontinue
- Had a goal to completely stop taking one or two medications in the past five years

The Impact of Peer Support on Choice



What are peer respites?

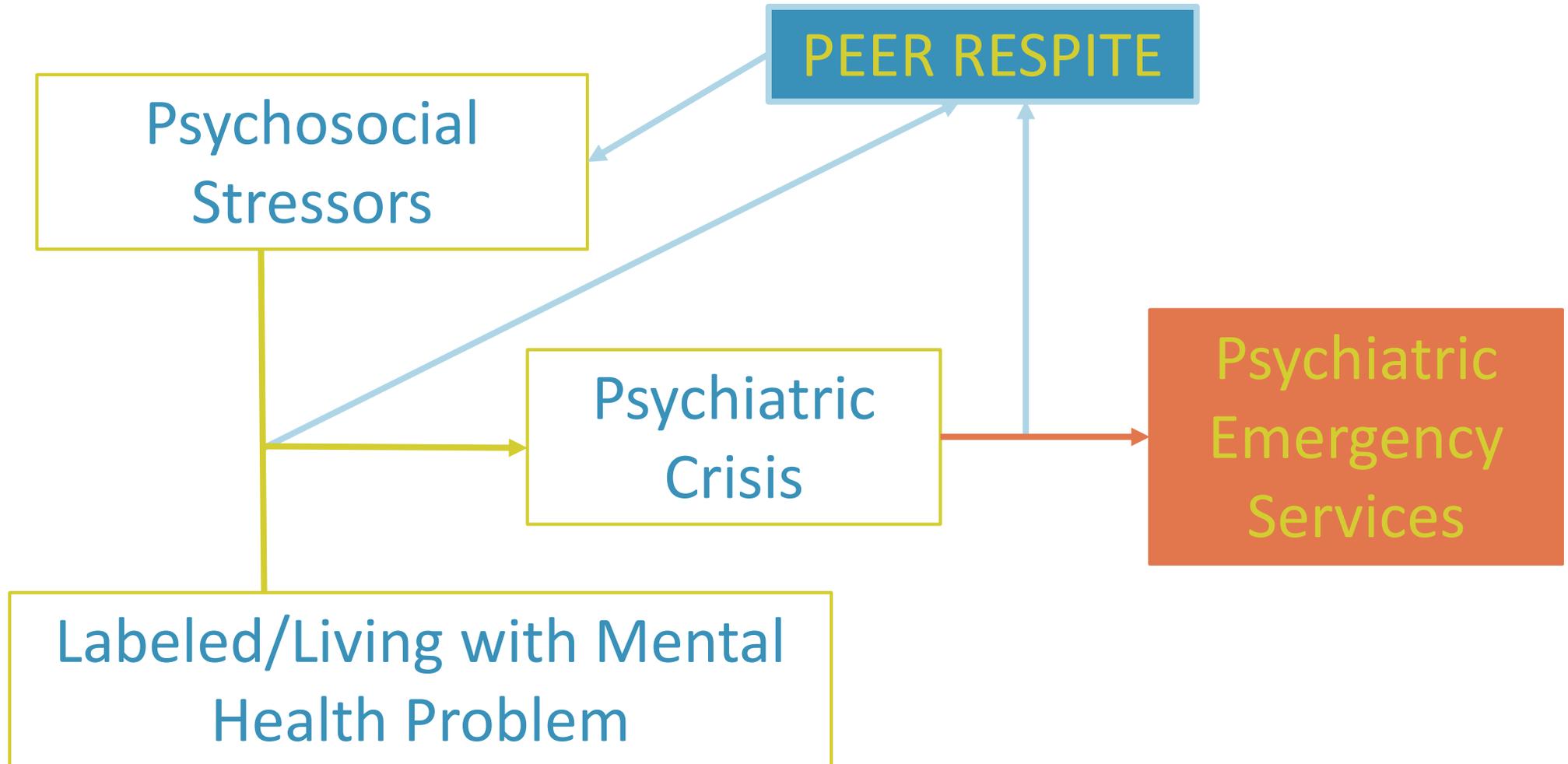
Voluntary, short-term, 24 hours per day in a homelike environment

Provide community-based, trauma-informed, and person-centered crisis support and prevention

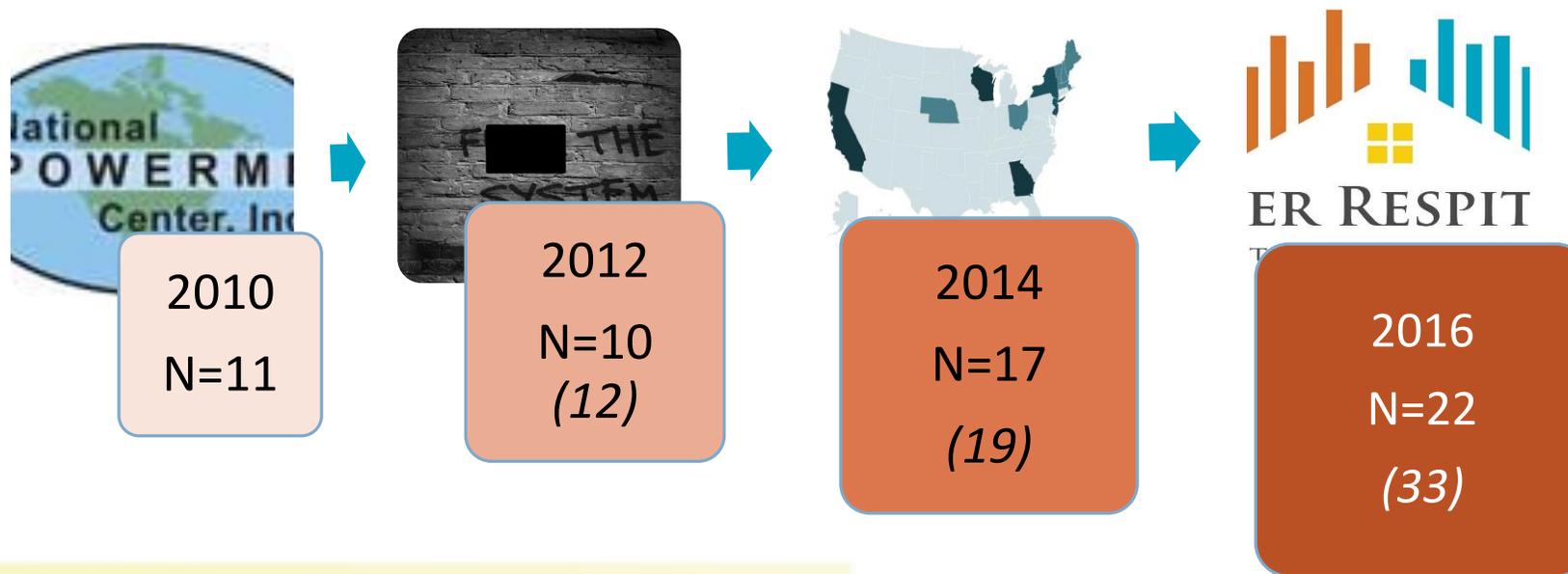
Staffed and operated by people with lived experience of the mental health system (peers)

Engage in mutual support relationships in which individuals help themselves and others

Crisis diversion theory

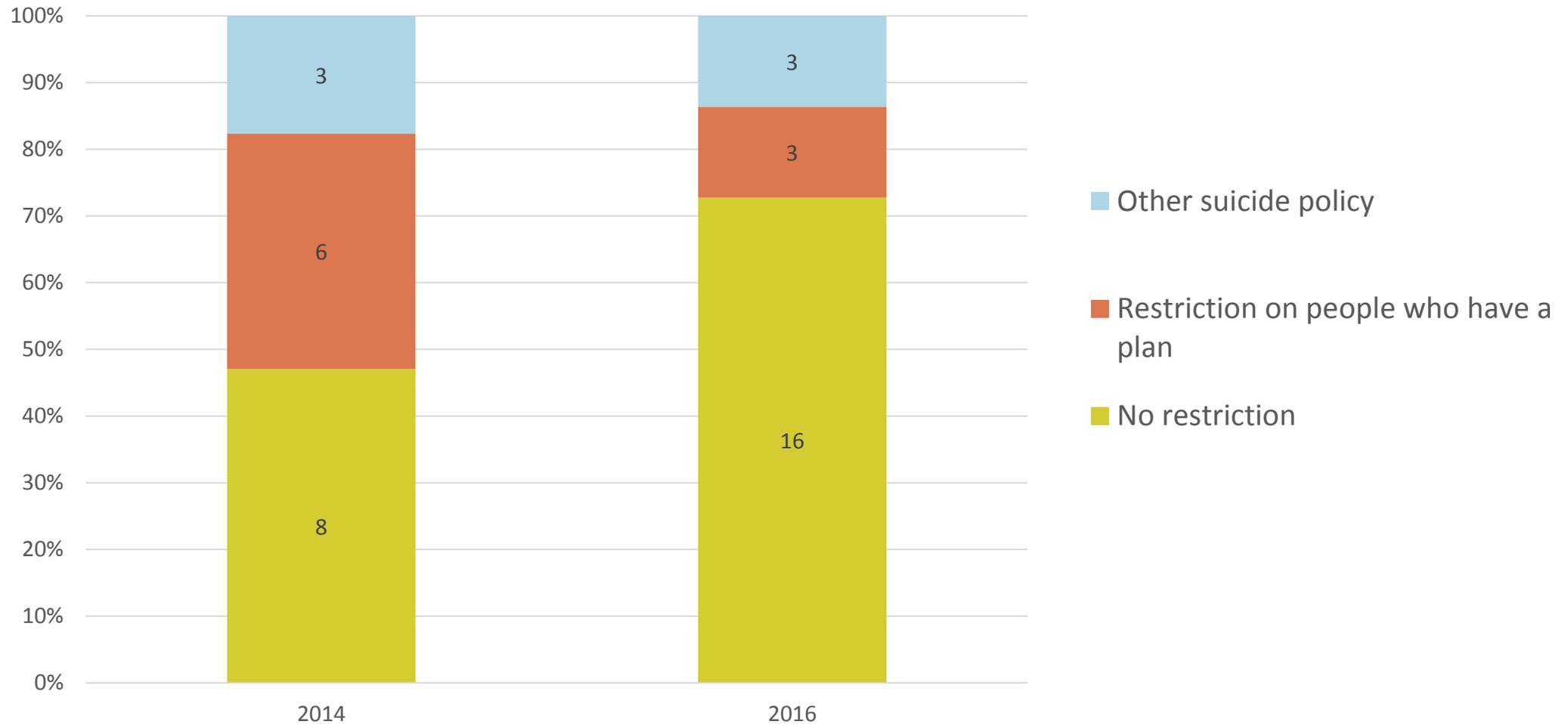


Peer Respite Growth

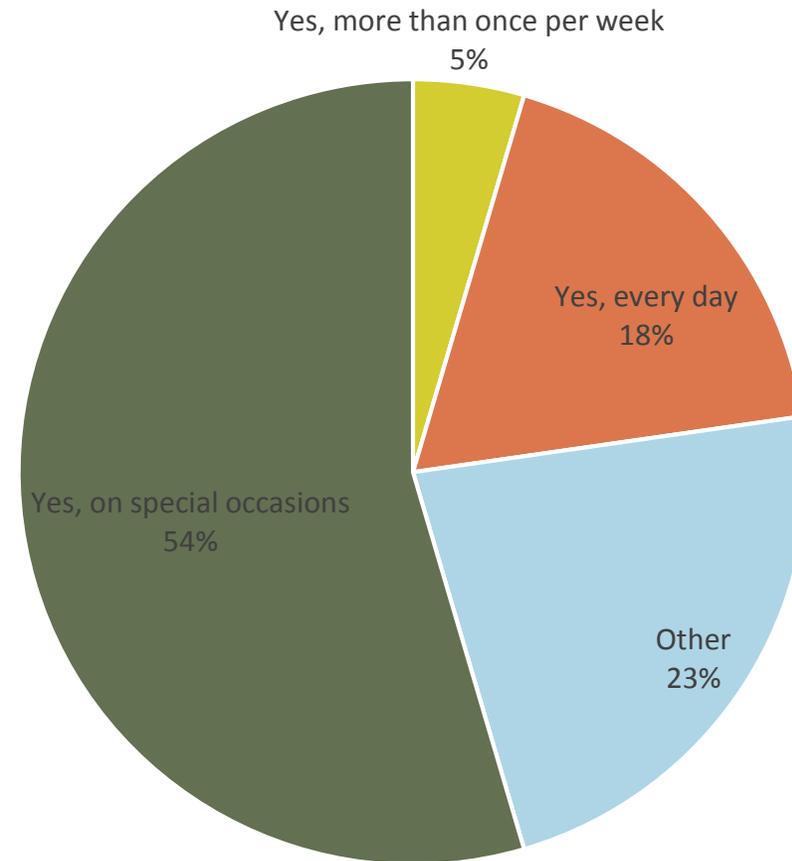


“The wholesale co-optation of genuine peer support into peer-staffed positions within mainstream programs is a shining example of what we don’t want to see happen with peer-run respites.”
—Survey participant

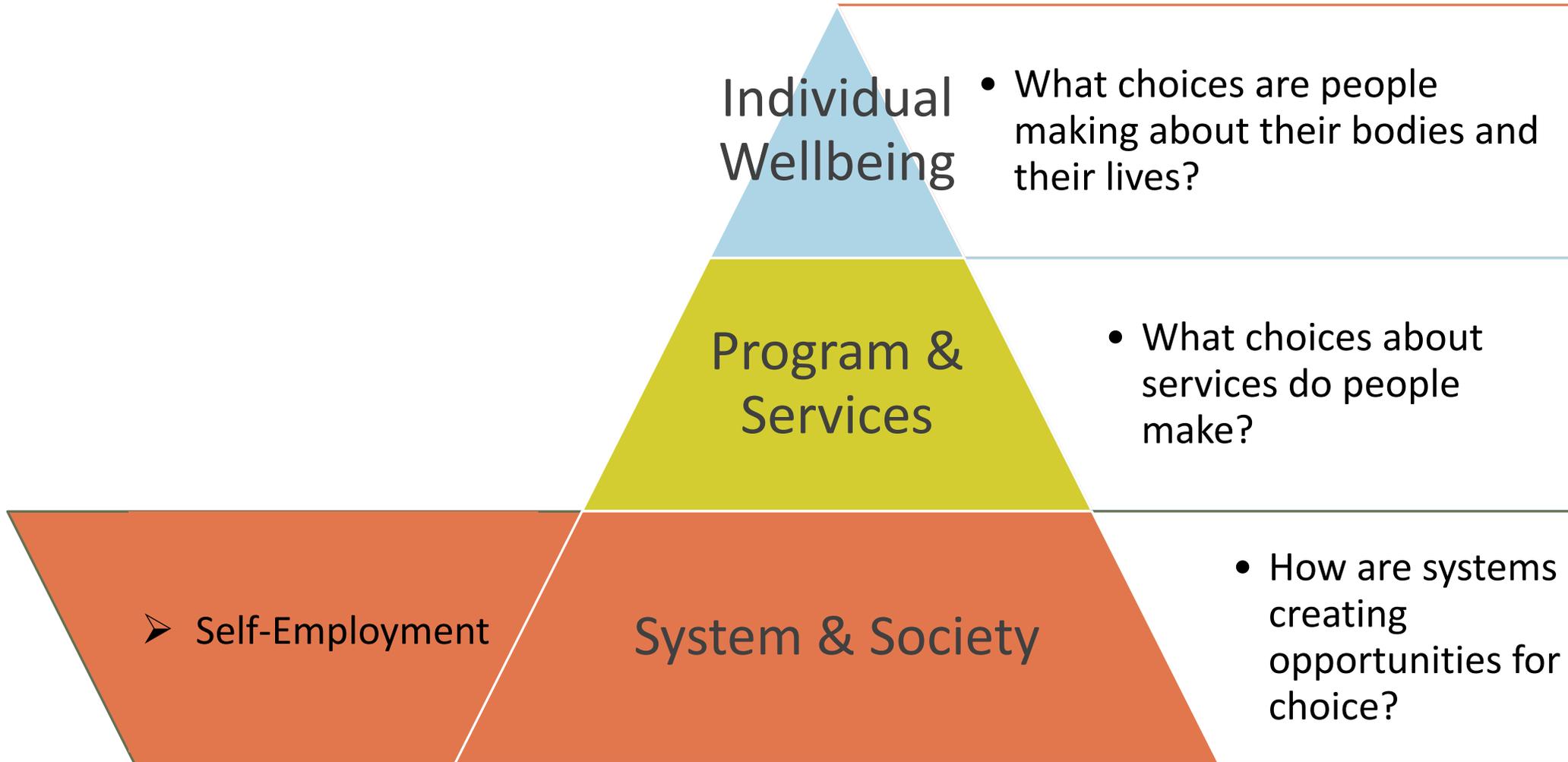
Policy on Suicide



Communal Meals



The Impact of Peer Support on Choice



Self-Employment & Psychiatric Disabilities

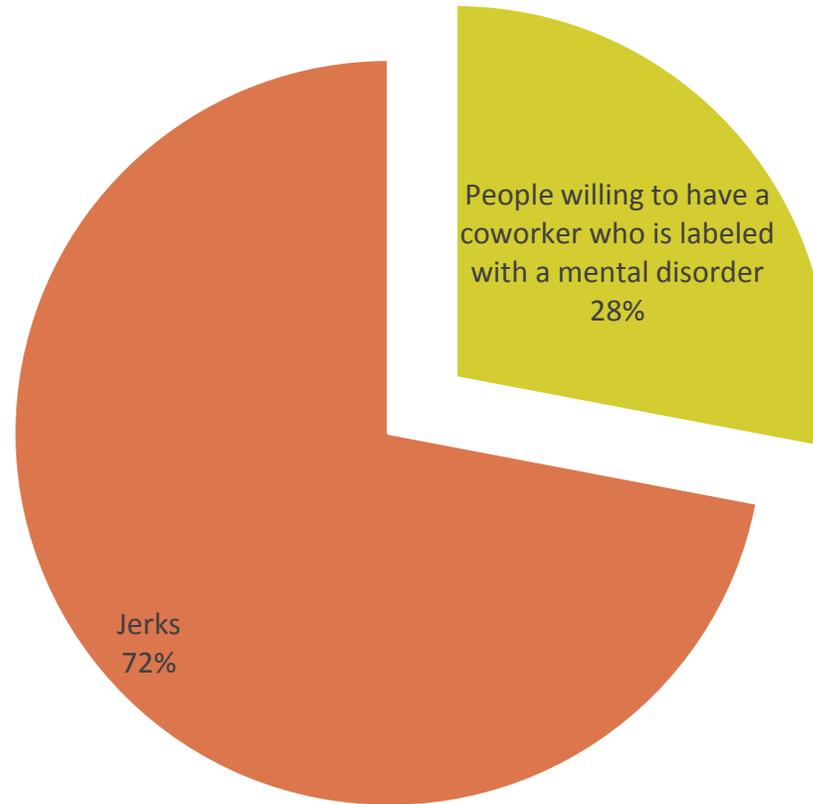


Workers with Psychiatric Disabilities
and Self-Employment through
Microenterprise

*Funded by the National Institute of
Disability, Independent Living, and
Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR)*

- Individuals with psychiatric disabilities experience high rates of unemployment
- Recent innovations in health policy and technology can facilitate self-employment
- Project goal: To examine self-employment and business ownership as a strategy to improve career and financial outcomes for individuals with psychiatric disabilities

Discrimination against Workers



Safety and Security

Discrimination and traumatic stress can make wage employment unsafe

Self-employment provides opportunities for individuals to design and enact a trauma-informed environment at work

Self-employment is one of the few options that provide people receiving SSI benefits the opportunity to grow wealth and security

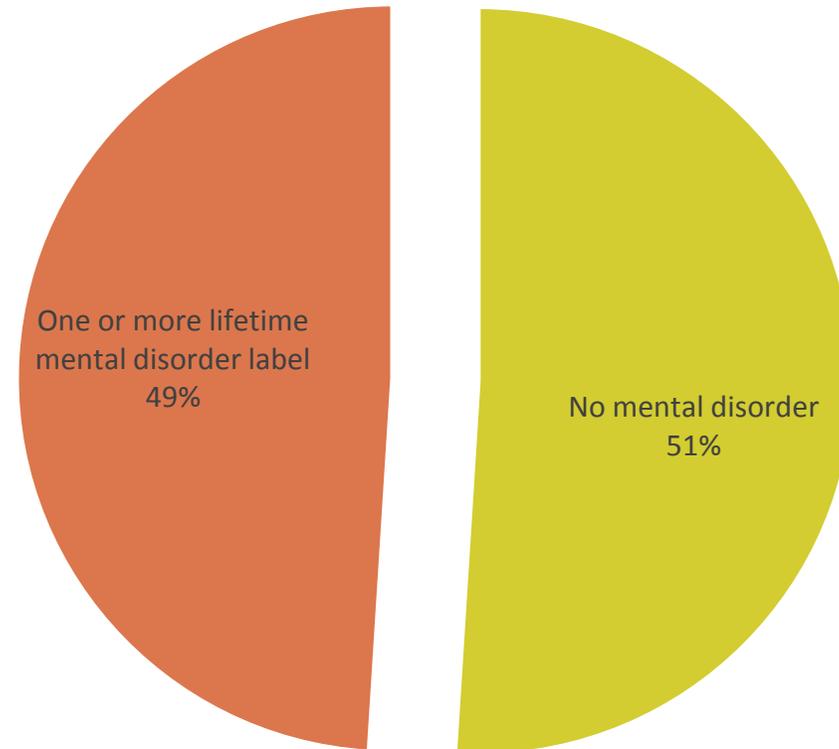
Employment Choices

Peer support, even in peer-run organizations, should not be the only choice

Self-employment in a small business is a potentially huge force in labor market participation

Other disadvantaged groups (vets, women, racial/ethnic minorities) have increasing support from the business community

Prevalence among Entrepreneurs



No recent studies on entrepreneurship among people with psychiatric histories

Project Goals

Environmental scan

- Identify and describe existing policies, practices, or products related to transition from disability to self-employment

Nationwide survey

- Understand the characteristics of individuals with psychiatric disabilities who own microenterprises

Results will provide information to aspiring entrepreneurs with psychiatric disabilities to facilitate creative and economic independence

Discussion

CAUTION !!
ACTIVE
BEEHIVE

Peer Support: Success in Promoting a Culture of Wellness?

Increased system and support capacity

- Expansion in our approaches to recovery and human rights
- Provide service choices and access points

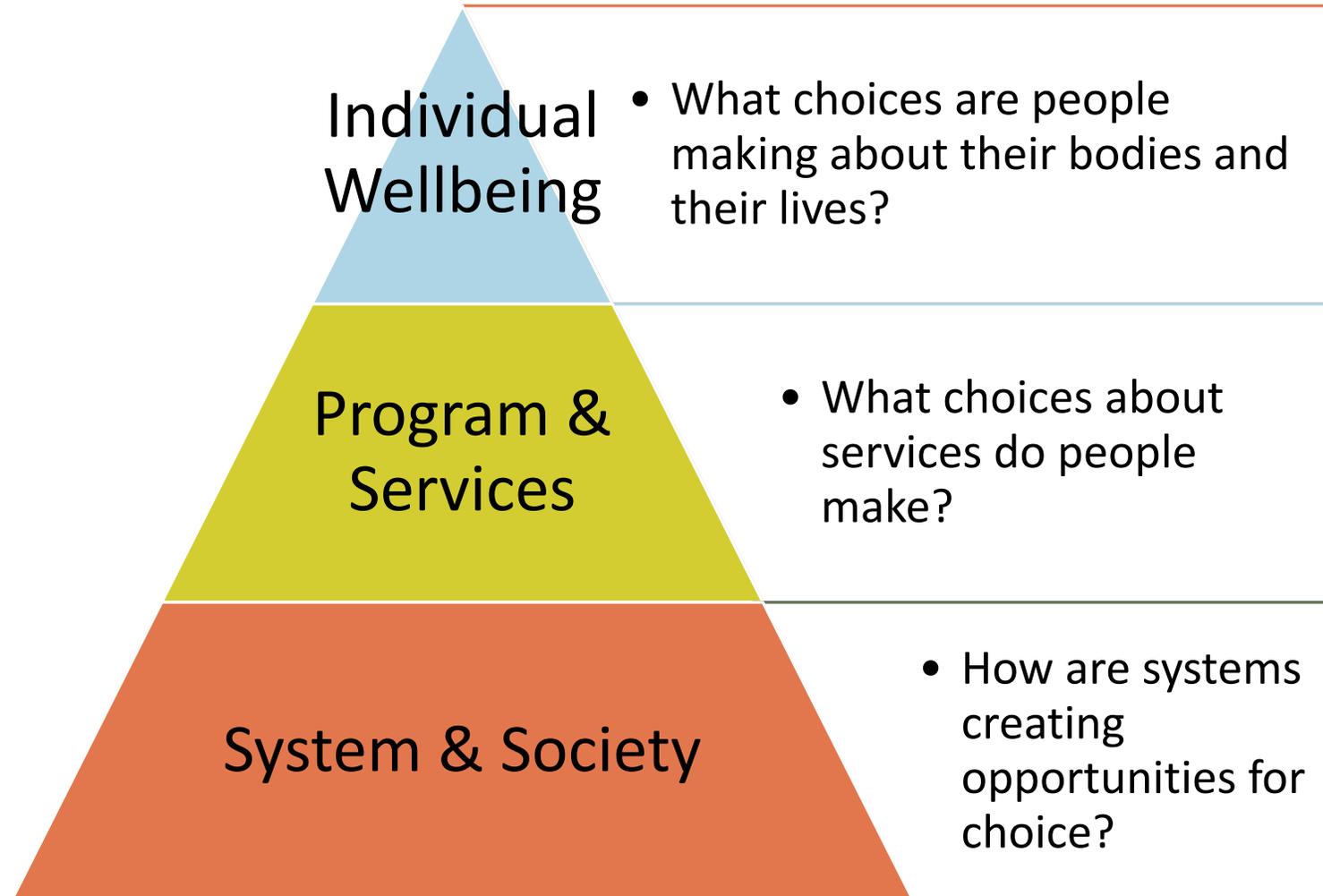
Professional opportunities

- Jobs created through peer specialist certification and reimbursement
- Growing number of peer-run programs and organizations

Changing perceptions of employability and self-sufficiency

- Meaningful employment and contributions of former service users to job roles and the workplace

The Impact of Peer Support



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HOME ABOUT PARTNERS PROJECTS **DISSEMINATION** ANNOUNCEMENTS CONTACT

PRINT

- Free mental safe houses open in New York City (CNN)
- Peer Respite for Mental Health Consumers Prevent Hospitalizations (California Health Report)
- Students With Disabilities Aim For A College Degree, But Often Get Stuck (Huffington Post)
- Rethinking Mental Health (Psychology Today)
- Beyond Awareness: Mental Illness and the Ableism of Capitalism (TruthOut.com)



VIDEO

- Peer Respite and Supportive Programs (CA Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions)
- Promoting College Access and Success For Students With Disabilities (U.S. Senate Hearing)

BLOGS

- *Mad in America* author page
- Civil rights, dangerousness, and mental illness: Beyond the 2nd Amendment (American Public Health Association)

RADIO/PODCAST

- ▶ Igniting public interest in the validity of mental disorders through the NIMH's RDoC policy

PRESENTATIONS

- Integrating Research & Advocacy into Public Mental Health Systems; Peer Advisory and Advocacy Team (PAAT) General Meeting, October 11, 2016 (San Luis Obispo, CA)
- Peer Respite: A National Perspective; Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force, September 13, 2016 (Milwaukee, WI)