

AS A FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY

“As peer support in mental health proliferates, we must be mindful of our intention: social change. It is not about developing more effective services but rather about creating dialogue that have influence on all of our understandings, conversations and relationships.” – Shery Mead



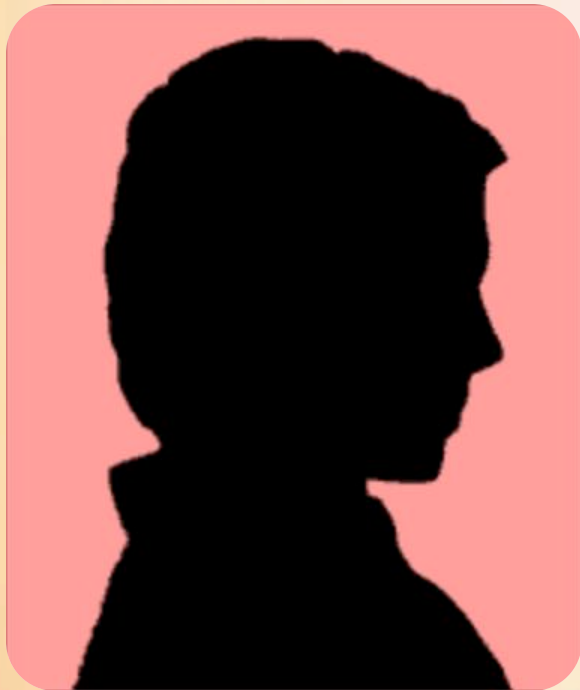
Community

What is Intentional Peer Support?

Intentional Peer Support is about creating relationships where you and I can together take a bigger look at how we've learned to operate in the world



From Helping to Learning
From Individual to Relationship
From Fear to Hope



Connection

Worldview

Mutuality

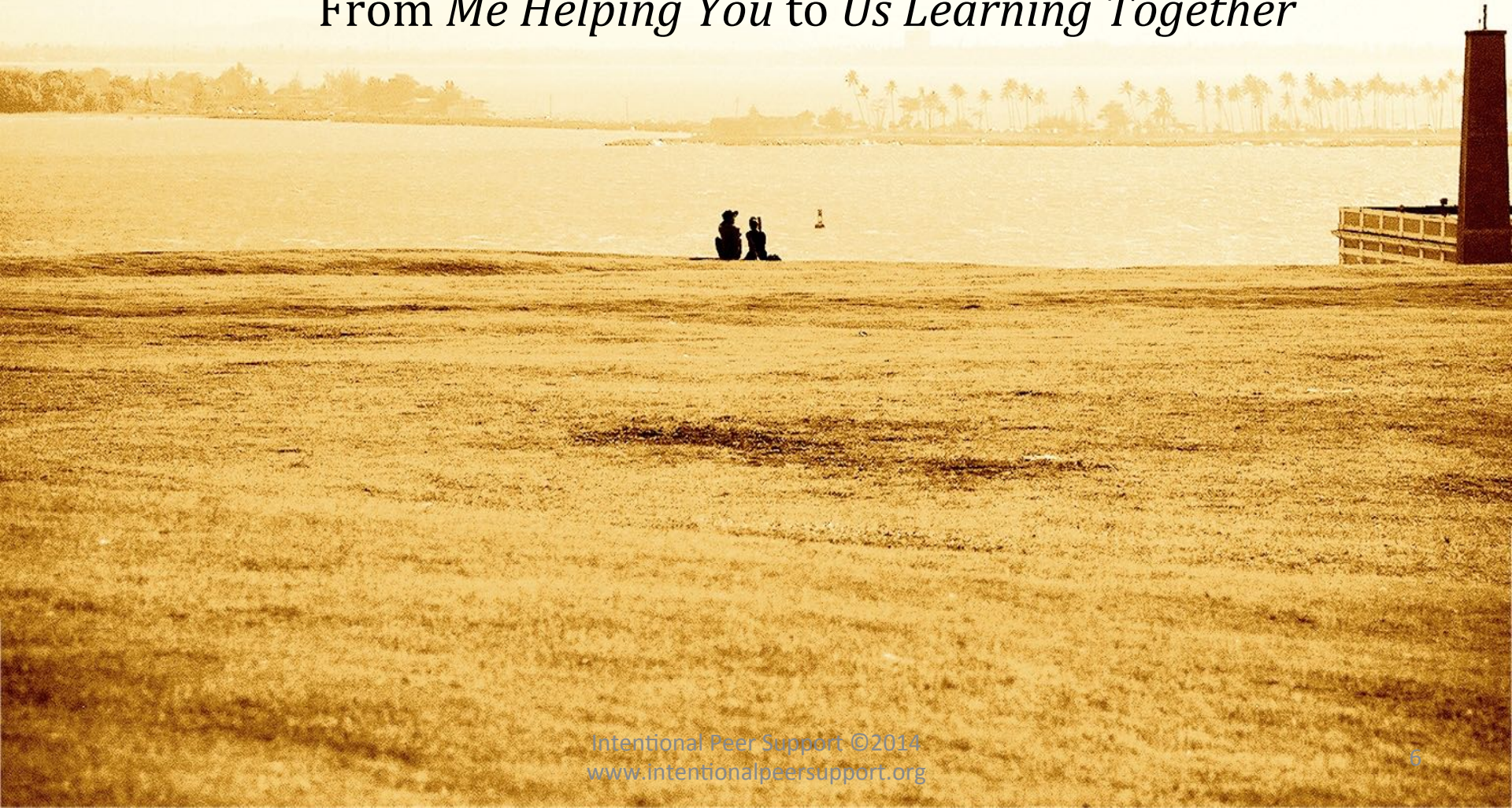
Moving Towards



From Helping to Learning

What is my role in this relationship?

From Me Helping You to Us Learning Together



HELPING ASSUMES:

- What I'm doing is bad
- Something needs to be different
- There is a PROBLEM
- The PROBLEM needs fixing
- I (we) know what you need
- You need my (our) 'help', "for your own good"
- I (we) have something or other than can help you get helped

Expert/Patient, Normal/Other

LEARNING



From Individual to Relationship

*When it's about
the individual*

- *No one else has to change*
- *We pre-determine
outcomes*
- *We lose sight of our own
learning*
- *We lose sight of the
relational dynamic*

*When it's about
the relationship*

- *Both people contribute to
mutual learning*
- *We learn how to
communicate with honesty
and openness*
- *Our relationship becomes
model of other relationships*

From Fear to Hope

FEAR-based relationships are based on what is wrong and what we're afraid is going to happen.

– Predictive, Prying, Prescriptive, Power-Imbalanced –

HOPE-based relationships are based on where we're going, how we can together create something new.

– Possibility –

The Challenges

- * Tolerating Uncertainty
- * Sitting with Discomfort
- * Holding Multiple Truths

Making Noise

- ♩ I start off with a melody. You notice that I miss a couple of notes. So you say, “I can’t follow you when you’re messing up! Let me start.”
- ♩ You begin a melody, this time in a different key. It doesn’t sound anything like what I’m used to, so I put down my instrument and watch.
- ♩ You’re frustrated, so you say, “Just play what I’m playing! You’ll be glad when you learn it! It will help you become an expert like me.”
- ♩ I try to mimic it and please you, but deep down it isn’t my style. Yet now we sound similar. So you say, “That’s great, man! You’re on the right track.”



Making Music



- ♩ I start off with a melody. You notice a few notes I play are unconventional, but you're curious where this could go.
- ♩ So, you start experimenting and soon find a rhythm that complements mine. When I hear yours, I answer back. Now, we're playing together and harmonizing.
- ♩ Our combined sound is more interesting than our individual parts, even though we had no plan except a mutual desire to play together. We're exploring...
- ♩ Later, you take us into a different key that I don't recognize. It's frustrating, even scary for a moment. But as I listen deeply and feel around my instrument, I find it and join you there. Now we're back on track. Where will we go next?

The Four Tasks



Connection

Worldview

Mutuality

Moving Towards



Connection

A white spiderweb is the central focus, set against a dark green background. The web is intricate, with a central spiral and concentric rings. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing a list of four bullet points. The overall aesthetic is clean and natural.

- ✧ A sense of belonging
- ✧ We're in it together
- ✧ Builds trust which leads to learning for both
- ✧ Moves the focus away from the individual and into the relationship

Connection



Disconnection



Reconnection



Worldview

A composite image where a world map is overlaid on a woman's face. The map's colors (blue for oceans, green and brown for land) are blended with the woman's skin tones and features. Her eyes are green and looking slightly to the right, and her lips are a deep red. The overall effect is a global perspective on human experience.

- **How I come to know what I know**
- **Trauma-Informed: “What’s wrong” becomes “What happened?”**

Why

Worldview?

Enrichment

Curiosity

Awareness

Understanding

Multiple Truths

Stretching

Seeing through your Worldview



∞ What's going on here?

∞ If that's your assumption, what might you say or do?

Mutuality: Redefining Help

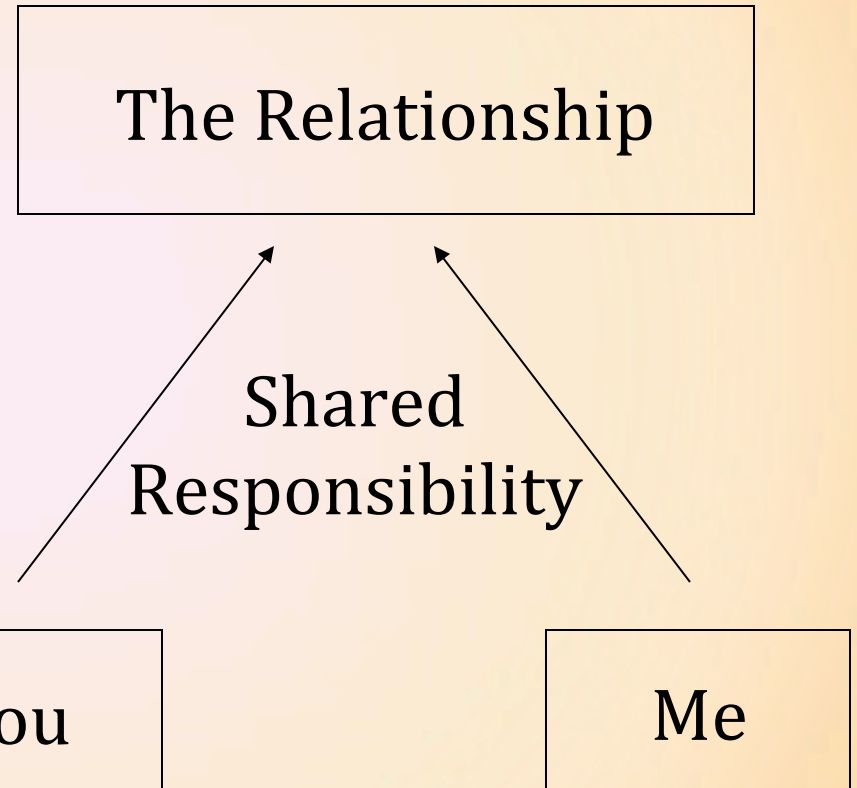
Learning and
growing together

Moving away
from a “service”
type relationship

It's only working
if it's working for
both of us

Often happens in
little moments

Mutual Responsibility



Moving Towards

The energy between us when we are creating new ways of seeing, knowing, and doing through the relationship

Peer Support is about Social Change

We start to:

Listen, rather than problem-solve

Make and transform meaning

Re-define mental health

Confront and negotiate power

Figure out how to make this work for all of us

Support and challenge each other to move
towards the lives we want

Change the world!

Contact Details

Email

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Website

www.intentionalpeersupport.org

Facebook

Intentional Peer Support / IPS Learning Community

Parachute Project

www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/mental/parachute.shtml

Artwork

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