

Does Peer Facilitation Training Effectively Lead to Community & Individual Empowerment?

Lessons Learned from the AIDS Bereavement Project of Ontario

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Background

In Ontario, the assumption that peer facilitation and capacity building leads to community and individual empowerment has not been sufficiently evaluated.

In collaboration with community members, the AIDS Bereavement Project of Ontario identified the need for effective training for peer facilitators who would provide bereavement and multiple loss support.

One of the objectives of this initiative was to identify and evaluate Peer Facilitator trainee capacities and skills learned, including: self-awareness, self-care, community building abilities and leadership.

Methods

Training retreats were held in two sessions, 16 and 18 participants respectively; their average age was 45, and 90% were HIV-positive, with an average of 15 years since diagnoses. Peer Facilitator Trainees represented a variety of geographic, social, cultural and sexual communities.

Trainees self-completed evaluation forms, rating their peer facilitation skills, confidence in skills learned, tools provided and participants' confidence in their own resources.

RESULTS

Trainees rated ABPO's Peer Facilitation training as being "very successful in preparing them to do peer support in their local community"; 7.4/10, (where 10 was very prepared to do peer support in their local community) was the average rating in the Fall Training. In the following Spring Training, an average rating of 8.6/10 was reported.

- 75% of all participants reported a high degree of confidence in communicating the Multiple Loss Journey to others, and they also felt confident in their ability to share the theory of grief and loss.



- ...And to effectively support others.



- Participants expressed an increased level of confidence in their abilities to use appropriate language to describe their experiences.



- They also felt a higher ability to reinvest and find value in their own lives.

Conclusions

This evaluation provides evidence that ABPO's Peer Facilitation Training model was successful in training Peer Facilitators to provide formal and informal peer support to others.