OPTIC has trained 105 students with our Peer Wellness Specialist curriculum, which has now been updated to include behavioral addictions (e.g. gambling, gaming, shopping), with an average class size of 21 students.

Through OPDSCO, over 20 educational presentations were provided on peer delivered services to groups such as Legacy Woodburn Behavioral Health, Linn County Health & Human Services, Health Careers NW, and Multnomah County Mental Health Court.

Of the 28 participants in the WA County CHOICE program, 85% have maintained long-term, mutually affirming relationships with peers referred to them. These relationships have been so beneficial that many participants are now ready to transition out of the program.

Through EVOLVE Project Nurture, labor doula support was provided for 28 births!

100% of peers that MHAOO assisted in finding housing retained housing. Participants have found work and better paying jobs, and have accessed legal services related to child support, child custody, and immigration status.

EVLVE Peer Support Service has continued their work through grants and contracts across Oregon to help individuals struggling with mental health and/or addiction on their path to recovery. Our team of Peer Support Specialists is dedicated to honoring the self-direction of those we serve.

We support peers in navigating various systems, such as the medical system, from hospitalization through outpatient services and the legal system, from juvenile drug court to county jail and DHS. Our PSS team has also assisted peers in finding transitional and permanent housing, employment, educational support, and building natural support networks.

Oregon Peer Training and Innovations Center (OPTIC) is currently holding the PWS training once per quarter, which is an increase from previous years. Additionally, on the last day of the training, the student and facilitator submit student applications to the Traditional Healthcare Worker (THW) for state certification.

Peerlink National Technical Assistance Center has worked in Hawaii and the Pacific Jurisdiction, including Guam, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan, Tinian, and Rota), Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, and American Samoa.

This year, Peerlink has supported Guam to develop its first peer organization, TOHCE, which means stand tallstrong in Chamorro. Peerlink also supported the first ever peer conference in the Pacific Micronesia Region, which was attended by 50 peers, family members, providers, and allies. This is now set to be an annual event.

Oregon Peer Delivered Services Coalition (OPDSCO) brings together individuals and agencies vested in the successful delivery of peer practices and the advancement of the peer workforce statewide. This year, they held a first-of-its-kind Employment Expo focused on peer careers at MHAOO’s Peerpocalypse conference with representation from 15 different employers.

WHAT IS PEER SUPPORT?

“To me, peer support is about approaching another person’s reality with respect and curiosity. In a way, it’s like entering into another person’s experience, taking a look around, validating where they are at in life and asking questions that can help you understand where they want to be.

Then you build a map together, you figure out what the next best step is, together. It’s believing in people. Believing in their ability to make their life what they want it to be and having the interest in helping them get there, because you know that, without some help along the way, you wouldn’t have made it.

It’s a beautiful thing to see someone flourish on their own terms. To watch and cheer them on as they gain confidence in themselves and to see the complications that were weighing them down start to lift.”

—Cee Carver, EVOLVE WEST Department Director