

# COVID-19 Response

Through COVID-19, lived experience makes impact

**22%**  
of staff at  
WCMHS Community Support Program  
are peers

*The Peer Support program (PSP) plays a dynamic role in the WCMHS Community Support Program by supporting those needing help in the areas of mental health and addiction.*

*The PSP team does this by sharing their lived experiences as individuals who have experienced mental health and addictive disorders themselves.*

*In fact, WCMHS strives to hire people with lived experience who can choose to share their stories. It is likely that many more staff who work at WCMHS have lived experience in one form or another, something that likely has great impact on the outstanding quality of care WCMHS provides to those served.*

*In FY21, the Peer Support Program provided nearly*

**4,246**

*hours of services to those in their care.*

## Peer Leadership – Lived Experience Strengthens Supports



### THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

Lived experience comes from living as a member of a minority or oppressed group. People who have lived with mental health, developmental disabilities and/or substance use disorders know first-hand about the challenges and what supports make a difference. VCP agencies are strengthened by the contributions of people with lived experience in critical leadership roles and in providing direct support to peers.

### PEERS LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION TAKES MANY FORMS

- Residential and housing supports
- Mental health crisis response, case management and crisis bed support
- “Warm” phone response line for support
- Consultation to families in crisis
- Peer mentoring for people transitioning back into the community
- Outreach to students with I/DD transitioning to adult services
- Staffing wellness centers and day programs for people in recovery
- Training on Mental Health First Aid and Intentional Peer Support
- Participation in ethics teams and clinical standards reviews
- Serving as community living coaches
- Participation on medication delivery teams
- Youth promoting safe and healthy social, physical and mental wellness through movement and activity
- Peer support for maternal mental health



Peers at Washington County Mental Health Services