



Community Peer Support Program

The Finding Hope Peer Support Program consists of a network of local LGBTQ+ peer mentors with lived experience who can provide support to other LGBTQ+ folks within their community.. Our Peer Support Program allows LGBTQ+ Coloradans, regardless of their identity, age, race, or geographic location, to: Address their mental health concerns with peers; develop positive relationships with their sexual orientation and gender identity; increase their social connections, leading to more equitable health outcomes for the LGBTQ+ community. This program will build community and reduce isolation in rural spaces where there is a major lack of culturally relevant behavioral health services, thus improving mental health outcomes and reducing the risk of suicide, especially during these unprecedented times.

These peer support workshops will be held virtually in Southern Colorado. Moreover, these workshops will have a specific focus in the following communities: Durango, Pagosa Springs, Cortez, Alamosa, Ouray, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Pueblo, La Junta, Walsenburg, Trinidad, and Lamar. We know, based on empirical evidence, that peer support recovery is the future of behavioral health. In a document compiled by Mental Health America, it is noted that peer support for individuals with mental health conditions or challenges reduces re-hospitalization, inpatient days, and overall cost of services, while increasing engagement in outpatient/inpatient services, quality of life outcomes, and holistic wellness. Among the many studies mentioned, the document noted that individuals receiving peer support show a significant decrease in substance use.

LGBTQ+ identity development is a lifelong process. Unlike many other marginalized and/or oppressed populations, most LGBTQ+ individuals are not raised in families or community environments that reflect their sexual orientation or gender identity. The intention behind Finding Hope is to provide spaces of support for LGBTQ+ people who often feel invisible. Many of our team members have that lived experience of feeling invalidated and invisible as members of the LGBTQ+ community. Our team recognizes that those who feel the most invisible often reside in small, rural communities and hold multiple marginalized identities.