What are peer respites & why are they important?

A peer respite is a voluntary, short-term, overnight program that provides community-based, non-clinical crisis support to help people find new understanding and ways to move forward.

Peer respites are...
- Open 24 hours a day in a homelike environment.
- Staffed, operated, and managed by people with lived experience of psychiatric diagnosis, extreme states, mental distress, trauma, and/or other life-interrupting challenges.
- Voluntary: guests can come and go as they please. For example, a guest could go to work during the day, and come to the respite at night for support.

Across the US, there are peer respites in at least 14 states, many of which have government funding.

Why lived experience?

People with lived experience are the most knowledgeable about their own experiences and are uniquely qualified to provide support for others going through similar issues.

Why peer respite?

Peer respites were designed as psychiatric hospital diversion programs to support individuals experiencing or at-risk of a psychiatric crisis. The premise behind peer respites is that psychiatric emergency services can be avoided if less coercive or intrusive supports are available in the community.

- Respites cost significantly **less** than psychiatric hospitals, with one study showing for a stay of 3-5 days, respites cost $1,057 per guest on average compared to $3,187 for psychiatric stays.
- Respite guests were 70% less likely to use traditional inpatient psychiatric or emergency services.
- Statistically significant increases in healing, empowerment, and satisfaction for respite guests over traditional psychiatric hospitals.
- Respite users report greater self esteem, self rated mental health symptoms and social activity functioning when compared with inpatient psychiatric hospital users.
- By centering consent & choice, peer respites avoid the problems with involuntary treatment, including that involuntary hospitalization can increase suicidality.

Compiled by the Yarrow Collective, with help from this website.

THE YARROW
COLLECTIVE
PEER SUPPORT, EDUCATION & ADVOCACY