



The Peer Support Role in Integrated Behavioral Health

Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder Integration Technical Assistance

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Vision: Healthy Communities, Healthy People



Disclosure

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Presenters



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Today's Agenda



Background and Getting Started



Defining and Structuring the Peer Support Role



Recruitment, Onboarding, and Training



Setting Up Peer Support for Success



Lessons Learned

Objectives

- Outline the essential skills and abilities of peer support specialists.
- Identify ways to structure peer support specialist onboarding, supervision, and feedback so they are successful in their health center roles.



Polling Question #1



Are peer support specialists integrated into your mental health and substance use disorder care team?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) We are considering adding this role to our integrated care team
- d) Other comments – type your response to the Q&A

What is the Peer Support Role?

- The Value of Peer Support in Integrated Behavioral Health
 - Peer support plays a growing role in helping people find recovery in the community.
 - Peer support workers offer and receive help based on shared understanding, respect, and mutual empowerment between people in similar situations.
- Activities:
 - Advocate and raise awareness for people with mental health and/or substance use disorders
 - Link to community resources
 - Facilitate, mentor, educate
 - Plan and develop groups, services, and activities

The Peer Support Role at Grace Health (1)

- Peer support specialists reference their own recovery journey to inspire hope and recovery.
- Perform warm handoffs to and from other providers and members of the patient's care team.

“

Unique distinction from other roles: *I understand what's going on with you. It happened to me, and this is what I did about it.*

”

The Peer Support Role at Grace Health (2)

- Collaborate across behavioral health, primary care, and community settings.
 - Linkage to recovery community.
 - Partners with other recovery-oriented organizations to promote recovery services.
 - Facilitates peer support groups with patients on numerous topics related to maintaining recovery.



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) Core Competencies – Peer Support

1. Engages peers in collaborative & caring relationships
2. Provides support
3. Shares their recovery journey
4. Personalizes peer support
5. Supports recovery planning
6. Links to resources, help, & support
7. Shares information about health, wellness, & recovery
8. Helps peers to manage crises
9. Values communication
10. Supports collaboration, teamwork, & network-building
11. Promotes leadership
12. Models growth & development



Recruitment, Onboarding, and Training (1)

- **Recruitment**
 - Focus on recovery journey and recovery maturity
- **Onboarding**
 - Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), documentation, and electronic health record (EHR)
 - Shadowing: peer support specialist and other team members to learn workflows

Recruitment, Onboarding, and Training (2)

- **Training**
 - Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), Assessment of Recovery Capital (ARC), and Brief Assessment of Recovery Capital (BARC-10) data tools
 - Motivational interviewing
 - SAMHSA and other evidence-based trainings
 - New hire onboarding training covering boundaries, de-escalation, crisis interventions, and overview of cognitive behavioral therapy

Grace Health: Setting Up Peer Support for Success

- **Certification.** Look for state-certified peer support specialists
- **Rigorous vetting.** Applicants are interviewed one to three times
- **Experience.** Minimum of one to two years sobriety
- **Early recovery support.** Smaller, lower-volume settings for early recovery peers
- **Supervision.** Quarterly one-on-ones and frequent check-ins
- **Leadership involvement.** Ongoing oversight by therapists and physicians working in the program as well as behavioral health director

Peer Support Collaboration and Continuous Support

- Peer support specialists attend case reviews and participate in multidisciplinary treatment teams to provide insight into patient progress.
 - Often the peer support specialist has the most beneficial feedback for treatment planning.
- Leadership maintains regular feedback and mentorship.

Guidance and transparency is key to supervising the peer support specialist.



Continuous Quality Improvement and Data Collection

- Data integrated into continuous quality improvement (CQI) reports for ongoing quality improvement:
 - **GRPA:** Captures federal outcomes for substance use disorder programs
 - **ARC:** Measures patient recovery capital
 - **BARC-10:** Brief recovery capital tool used in quarterly reviews

Lessons Learned

- **Hire with discernment.** Focus on recovery stability, not just past legal charges.
- **Understand context.** Many charges (e.g., theft, assault) stemmed from impairment.
- **Active observation.** Leadership and teams observe and provide feedback.
- **Increase validation.** Recognize and celebrate peer support impact.
- **Increase check-ins.** Frequent one-on-ones are vital.
- **Servant leadership:**
 - How can this person best serve people with substance use disorder?
 - How can I be a servant leader to my peer support?

Q&A



References and Resources (1)

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