



Peer Workforce Strengths and Challenges: Peer Support Specialists and Recovery Coaches

Haner Hernandez, Ph.D., CPS, CADCI, LADCI

hanerhernandez@aol.com

413.627.1601



Instagram

Historical Context

“For more than 275 years, individuals and families recovering from severe alcohol and other drug problems have provided peer-based recovery support (P-BRS) to sustain one another and to help those still suffering.” (William White, 2009)

Larry Davidson, Professor of Psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine, “tracks the beginnings of peer support to a psychiatric hospital in late 18th century France. The governor of Bicêtre Hospital in Paris, Jean Baptiste Pussin, recognized the value of employing recovered patients as hospital staff.” (Patrick Tang, 2013)

Growth of the Peer Workforce

- The largest growth in the Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder workforce has been amongst people with lived experience - Peers (SAMHSA)
- Peer Specialists and Recovery Coaches are providing Peer services in a wide range of settings
- Access to training and certification and recertification continues to be provided to Peers with lived experience

Present Day Context

- Recognition of Workforce Crisis
- Majority White, Baby Boomer and Retiring
- Young, Diverse Population in need of Services
- Requires and Understanding of Disparities and Lead with Building Equity

Peer Workforce Needs

- Jobs with living wages, benefits, and appropriate recognitions of their value
- Clear Job Descriptions, with Roles and Responsibilities
- Adequate, Consistent, and Ongoing Supervision grounded in the Roles and Responsibilities
- Support and Guidance regarding their own Recovery Processes and Pathways

Opportunities for Actions

- Present Clear Job Descriptions and how Peers are Compensated
- Be Specific/Clear about how the Roles of Peers are Presented to Members are how they will be Integrated into the Care Plans
- Hold Organizations Accountable for Supporting Peers within the Specified Roles of Peers
- Focus on Disparities and Building Equity

Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) Example

- They Hire, Train and Supervise all the Recovery Coaches in CT Emergency Departments
- All Coaches are hired at a minimum of \$22 per hour, with full benefits. Some are earning up to \$30 per hour
- Job Descriptions are Consistent and Clear and Training is Ongoing
- Adequate Individual and Group Supervision is Provided Consistently and Recovery Supports are Provided to the Recovery Coaches
- The Recovery Coaches are Diverse and there is Focus on Equity



Gracias - Thanks