



Amplifying & Including the Voices of People with Lived Experience through Leadership & Employment Opportunities

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Today's Agenda



- Best Practices for Including People with Lived Experience (PWLE) in Decision-Making
- Panel and Audience Questions

Inclusion Through Various Paths



- Leadership/membership Opportunities
 - Committees
 - Board membership
 - Focus groups
 - All forums where decisions are being made
- Employment of Peer Support Workers with Lived Experience in Supportive Housing

Leadership/Membership

- Compensation/reimbursement for their time and expertise
- Eliminate travel, tech or other barriers
- Prep member in advance: background and purpose of committee and goals to be accomplished
- Ensure understanding of their role as a member
- Same decision-making power as other committee members
- Explain expectations, deliverables and commitment of committee members



The background features a complex network diagram with numerous nodes of various sizes and colors (yellow, green, blue, purple) connected by thin grey lines. The nodes are scattered across the frame, creating a sense of interconnectedness. The overall color palette is light and airy, with a white background and a subtle grid of small dots at the bottom.

Peer Support Specialists Employed in Supportive Housing

Understanding Peer Support

Peer support encompasses a range of activities and interactions between people who share similar experiences of being diagnosed with mental health conditions, substance use disorders, or both. This mutuality—often called ‘peerness’—between a peer support worker and person in or seeking recovery promotes connection and inspires hope.”



Peer Support Workers



- Have lived experience of mental illness, substance use, or co-occurring conditions
- Are formally trained and employed to help others who are experiencing similar situations
- An individual with stable and sustained recovery willing to provide experiential knowledge and strategies to facilitate the recovery journey.
- Provide non-clinical, strengths-based support using a whole-person framework
- Build trust by sharing key pieces of their successful recovery journey and modeling life in recovery
- Certified peers successfully perform and work at all organizational levels in various positions and roles

Benefits of Peer Support

Improved access to & engagement
with supports & services

Reduced substance use-related
harm

Reduced drug & alcohol use/return
to use rates

Increased housing stability

Reduced hospitalizations

Decreased crisis services

Reduction in morbidity & mortality



Internal Opportunities When Establishing New Peer Roles at your Agency



Agencies must approach hiring peers holistically and consider changes in organizational culture and practices

- Securing agency commitment & buy-in at all levels
- Operating from a recovery-oriented model
- Updating policies & procedures
- Trauma-informed human resources practice
- Promoting diversity, equity, & inclusion
- Addressing stigma and bias in the workplace
- Enhancing employee assistance & supports
- Identifying funding

Recruiting & Hiring Peer Support Workers



- Job descriptions: roles and duties
- Pay rates/living wage
- Recruiting peer workers
- Work histories & “experience”
- Length of time in recovery
- Onboarding new employees
- Supervision & ongoing support

Panel Presentation





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