Effectively Integrating Peer Workers into Substance Use Service Systems

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Project ECHO®

University of California Los Angeles
Integrated Substance Abuse Programs

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Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

- We respectfully acknowledge that we live and work in territories where Indigenous nations and Tribal groups are traditional stewards of the land.
- Please join us in supporting efforts to affirm Tribal sovereignty across what is now known as California and in displaying respect, honor and gratitude for all Indigenous people.

Whose land are you on?

Option 1: Text your zip code to 1-855-917-5263

Option 2: Enter your location at https://native-land.ca

Option 3: Access Native Land website via QR Code:

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April is National Minority Health Month (NMHM)

"A time to raise awareness about health disparities that continue to affect people from racial and ethnic minority groups and encourage action through health education, early detection, and control of disease complications." Learn more about NMHM.

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The use of affirming language inspires hope and advances recovery.

LANGUAGE MATTERS.

Words have power.

PEOPLE FIRST.

The ATTC Network uses affirming language to promote the promises of recovery by advancing evidence-based and culturally informed practices.

ATTC Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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Effectively Integrating Peer Services into Substance Use Service-Systems

Tim Saubers

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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A Little About Tim Saubers

- Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist since 2016
- Experience in crisis-services peer support, peer supervision, and state and national level program management and development
- Vice President of the National Association of Peer Supporters
- Enjoys volunteering, paleontology, and learning

Disclosures

There are no relevant financial relationships with ACCME-defined commercial interests for anyone who was in control of the content of this activity.

At its core peer support is about building genuine human connections through empathy and shared experiences

What are Peer Support Values?

- Centers **mutuality** and genuine relationships of support
- Recognizes the validity of **multiple pathways** to self-defined “recovery”
- Aims to understand the role trauma can play in people’s lives and offer **trauma-informed** peer support
- Advocates a **person-centered** (or self-directed) approach to healing rather than one-size-fits-all solutions
- Connects with others from a place of **curiosity**
- Respects and views the people they support (**peers**) **as the experts** in their own lives and experiences
- Offers support based in the recognition of personal strengths/assets (**strengths-based**) rather than defects, deficits, or diagnoses centered in pathology
- Places the principle of **self-determination** in a foremost position when navigating ethical questions

How Does this Impact Systems?

- Peer culture focuses on mutuality, transparency, respect, and self-determination. These stand in contrast to the values current systems have been built upon

- Peer specialists often have the burden of holding up the mirror to systems, and those working within them, for reflection

- The foundational peer value of “multiple pathways” can seismically shift systems in new directions

Peer Specialists' Roles

- Cultivate empowering and supportive relationships
- Use self-disclosure and their own lived experience as a valuable tool
- Provide information about community and recovery-oriented resources upon request
- Assist in supporting peers, even in crisis*
- Value self-determination as a guiding ethical principle*
- Facilitate person-centered goal setting
- Communicate effectively with peers, other team members, and clinicians*
- Create an environment of respect for peers and those with lived experience
- Seek to understand the roles culture, community, and identity play in peers' lives
- Practice trauma-informed approaches in peer relationships and work places
- Inspire hope for recovery and wellness
- Affect positive change in systems (Systems Disruptors)*

Funding Streams to Support Peer Services

- Medicaid and Medicare Services
- Grant Funding
- Private Insurance
- Donations
- Alternate Billing Codes

California's Billing Structures for Peer Support Services

- California currently allows billing for peer services in two programs:
  - The Specialty Mental Health Services
  - Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System
- However, they must do so under the provider type "other qualified provider"
- The Department of Health Care Services is currently in the process of establishing peers as a unique provider type within specific, reimbursable services
- This provider type is expected to launch on January 1, 2022
- Billable peer services are expected to begin on July 1, 2022

Barriers to Peer Work in Clinical Settings

- Systemic and individual views and paternalization of people with lived experience
- Misunderstandings and willful erasure of the history and foundations of peer work and certification
- Different service models having different approaches to supporting people experiencing “crises”

Breaking Down Systemic Barriers

- Individual and collective reflection and education
- Acknowledgement of harm done by systems to others working within them: clinicians, social workers, counselors, case managers, etc.
- Re-centering the voices of the people receiving services to the core of the systems in which we work

What can Successful Integration Look Like?

- Development of collaborative treatment teams
- Wellness focused workplaces
- Integration of new value systems into existing service systems
- The development of completely new service systems

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Questions?

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