

Value of Peers in Recovery?

Peer refers to people who belong to the same group. Groups may be based on age, social group, gender, race, sexual orientation, etc. Peers in behavioral health are persons with mental health or substance use issues and people in recovery. Peer support offers a level of understanding and support not found in other relationships. The foundation of peer support is the relationship between the supporter and the person receiving support. Peer support is voluntary. It is up to the person receiving support to decide whom they relate to as peers. Both peers benefit from the relationship.

Does Peer Support Aid Recovery?

Peer support includes a range of activities and interactions. Peer support and peer services help to advance recovery in the community by:

- Increasing hopefulness for recovery
- Increasing self-advocacy and independence
- Reducing symptoms and substance use
- Increasing use of outpatient services
- Improved sense of belonging to community
- Increasing awareness of early warning signs
- Increasing ability to cope with stress
- Improving communication with providers
- Reducing hospitalizations



What Does a Peer Recovery Specialist Do?

Peer Recovery Specialists provide non-clinical recovery support services to peers during all stages of the recovery process. Through shared understanding, respect, and mutual empowerment, they provide support to Assisting with developing wellness plans

Some examples of peer recovery support services include:

- Providing 1:1 emotional support
- Sharing personal recovery stories
- Assisting with focusing on a life in recovery verses diagnosis
- Assisting with learning and practicing self-advocacy skills
- Assisting with expressing personal choices

- Assisting with linking to primary care and behavioral health providers
- Assisting with connecting with natural supports
- Providing support during a crisis
- Assisting with connecting to recovery communities and support groups
- Providing telephone support
- Participating in treatment meetings and collaborating with clinicians
- Modeling self-care and effective use of recovery skills
- Assisting with learning how to combat social stigma and eliminate self-stigma

Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS)

Many states, including Maryland, offer a state certification for peers interested in getting a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) credential. A CPRS must have a significant level of personal recovery, complete required trainings, have a minimum number of hours of experience (work/volunteer), supervision, and pass an examination.

Maryland Addiction and Behavioral-health Certification Board (MABPCB) oversees the CPRS credentialing process. The board implements standards, testing, and training for peer recovery specialists and their supervisors. If you want to learn how to become a CPRS, contact:

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