

Listening to the Peer Support Workforce – Top Ten Priorities : Action Agenda


October 2, 2024

Rita Cronise and Jeremy Reuling


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Welcome

- Welcome to the PeerTAC Supervision Learning Network!
- Facilitator Introductions
- A Word About the Network

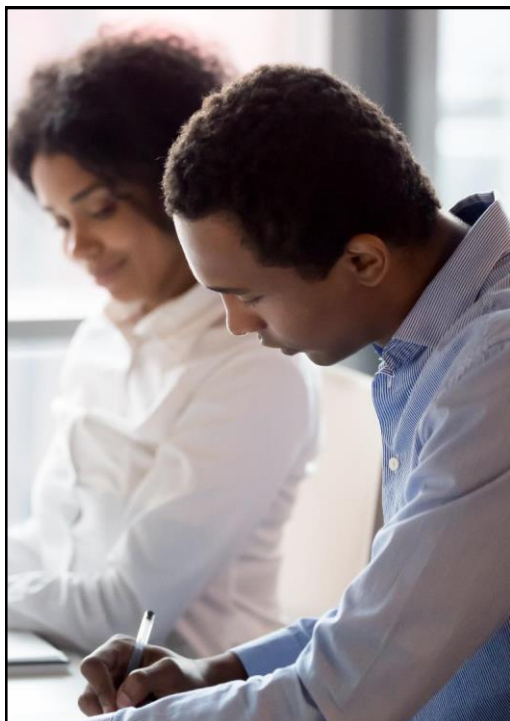


**SUPERVISION
LEARNING NETWORK**



Funded by:  **Office of Mental Health**

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About the Supervision Learning Network

A frequent request among supervisors – having the opportunity to share challenges and solutions with each other

- Growing from Regional to Statewide
- Identify supervisors doing noteworthy work
- Share innovative and exemplary practices
- Recruiting next year's presenters for the Summit

The PeerTAC Supervision Learning Network is a place to get connected and find out what's happening in the world of supervision

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Listening to the Peer Workforce: What We Heard... And What You Can Do

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Decision Solutions Consulting)

PeerTAC Supervision Learning Network -
October 2, 2024



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Today's Agenda

- Introduce presenters, participants, and the Top Ten Priorities: Action Agenda
- Describe the timeline, literature review, and development
- Overview of the stakeholders and action recommendations
- Identify advocacy strategies you can do in small groups
- Share advocacy strategies with the large group
- Q&A and Wrap Up



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Tell us about you...

Role Call Poll

- Supervisor (non-peer)
- Supervisor (peer)
- Manager
- Organizational leader
- Peer specialist
- Other --- share in the Chat



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A Chat Challenge


Complete the statement:

The biggest challenge I experience in the peer support workforce is...

It may be related to supervision or something else.

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What is the Action Agenda?

The Action Agenda is an organized list of challenges we've heard from the peer support workforce over several years. We've listed them as priorities that need to be addressed to improve conditions for the peer workforce.

Listening to the Peer Support Workforce

**Top Ten Priorities:
An Action Agenda**

Jeremy Reuling, LCSW, NYCPS, Rita Cronise, MS, ALWF, and Jessica Wolf, PhD

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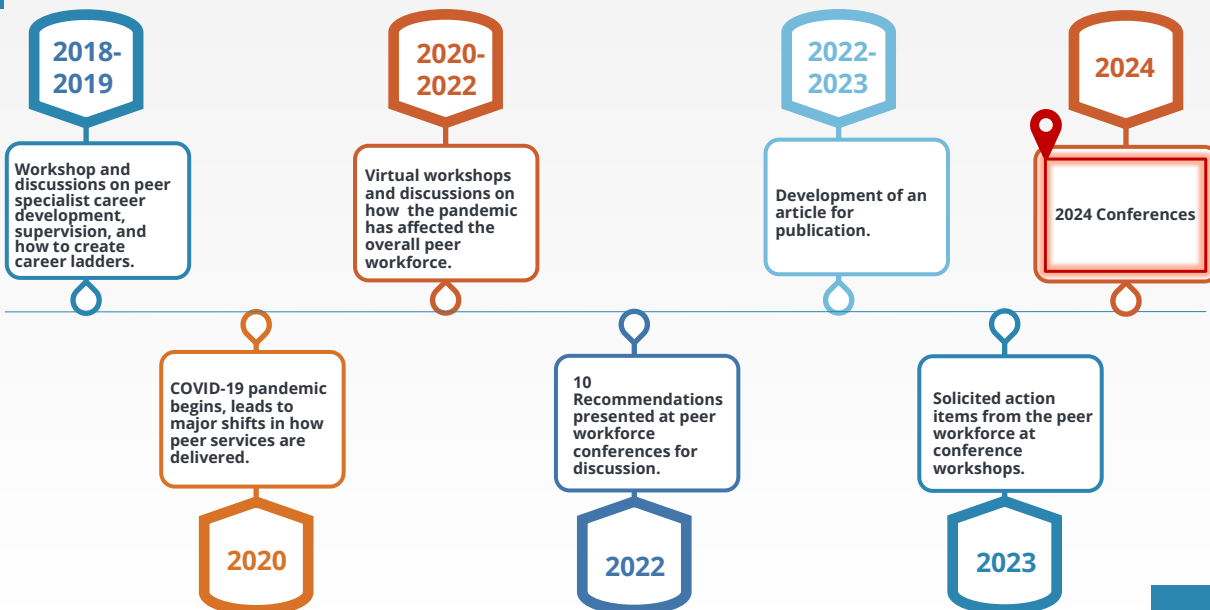
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What are the Top Ten Priorities?

- 1 Value the role of peer specialists as disruptive innovators
- 2 Raise wages equivalent to other support and service roles
- 3 Increase number of peer specialist jobs
- 4 Create career opportunities for members of marginalized communities
- 5 Fund leadership roles that do not require advanced degrees
- 6 Expand opportunities to build skill in supervision and management
- 7 Assure supervisors identify as peer specialists or have training in peer practices
- 8 Provide trauma-informed workplaces and services
- 9 Elevate wellness and grant time and resources to support wellness needs
- 10 Provide resources to increase technical skills for telehealth peer support

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Where Did These Priorities Come From?



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References

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Bloom, S. (2010). Organizational Stress and Trauma: A Perspective of Women's Mental Health, 295-311. *Journal of Women's Health Issues*, 20(3).

Borkman, T. J. (1990). Experiential, professional, and cultural competence. *Journal of Social Work*, 35(1), 3-30. National Association of Social Workers.

Is there any Evidence for these Priorities?

Yes. These priorities appear repeatedly in the literature, though never in one place that came directly from the workforce itself.

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How Can These Priorities Help the Workforce?

They can be used to create "action agendas." Advocates and other stakeholders can use the priorities and recommended actions to organize and strategize around issues that need to be addressed for a stronger peer support workforce.

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Stakeholder Groups

The Action Recommendations are listed in stakeholder groups of peer specialists, supervisors, employers, and policy makers as described below.

- **PEER SPECIALISTS** – people with lived experience of mental health, trauma, or substance use challenges who are trained and supervised to provide peer support services
- **SUPERVISORS** – individuals who supervise peer specialists who may be “peer” supervisors (people who are peer specialists themselves) or “non-peer” supervisors (usually licensed professionals who are not peer specialists, and who are assigned to provide supervision)
- **EMPLOYERS** – includes the organizational leadership team and operational management of organizations that offer peer support services
- **POLICY MAKERS** – individuals or groups within local, state, or national government; academic or research institutions; insurance corporations; funders; or others who make or influence policy related to behavioral health

What Stakeholders Should be Involved?

At a recent national conference for peer specialists, participants identified four main stakeholder groups that should be involved in addressing these priorities.

- Peer Specialists
- Supervisors
- Employers
- Policy Makers



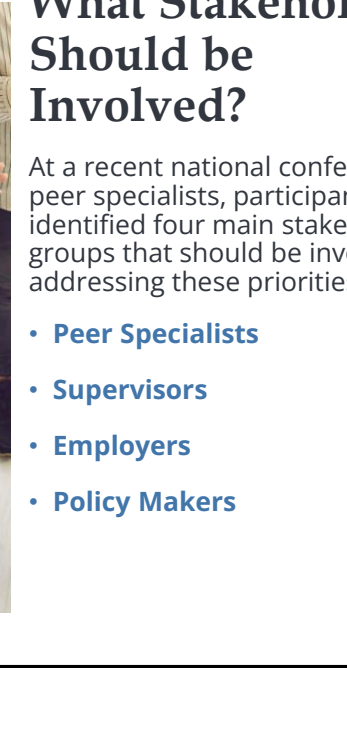
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Top Ten Priorities: An Action Agenda

- 1 Value peer specialists' roles and perspectives as disruptive innovators; empower peer specialists as essential drivers of systemic change throughout human services.
- 2 Raise peer specialist wages to equivalence with comparable supportive and service roles, considering cost of living in different geographic areas.
- 3 Increase the number of, and respect for, peer specialist jobs, fields of practice, and roles throughout the human services sector.
- 4 Intentionally create and promote career opportunities for members of historically marginalized communities, including BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities.
- 5 Establish designated funding for the creation of supervisory and advanced leadership roles for peers, not dependent on having advanced degrees or another license, certificate, or similar credential.
- 6 Expand training opportunities for peer specialists to build skills in supervision, management, and leadership.
- 7 Assure that all peer specialists are supervised by a person who either identifies as a peer themselves or has extensive training in peer values and practices.
- 8 Provide trauma-informed workplaces, as well as trauma-informed services.
- 9 Elevate and emphasize wellness as a necessary component in successful workplaces; grant peer specialists time and resources to support their personal wellness needs.
- 10 Increase opportunities for peer specialists to develop technological skills and provide resources necessary to utilize and access tools for providing telehealth support.

What Can Stakeholders Do?

Participants also identified actions that members from each of the four stakeholder groups can do to address each of the priorities.



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Example: Value the role of peer specialists as disruptive innovators

Priority 1 Action Recommendations

PEER SPECIALISTS	SUPERVISORS	EMPLOYERS	POLICYMAKERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believe in the value of your lived experience and ability to advocate for change Build emotional strength and ask for support when challenging the status quo Invite others into the "peer support world" by sharing gratitude and hope Ask open ended questions, listen carefully, and practice cultural humility Provide relevant experientially-based, non-clinical (recovery-focused) perspectives for colleagues to consider, especially when working on multidisciplinary teams Allow people receiving peer support services choice (a peer value), including whether to use services and how their perspectives will be shared with other members of a multidisciplinary team Reframe stigmatizing language (educate as well as advocate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create job descriptions based on competencies of peer support work rather than duplicating work of case managers, counselors, or care coordinators Encourage peer specialists to embrace their ability to change the organization from within as disruptive innovators Train non-peer staff about the advocacy and system change role of the peer specialist on a multidisciplinary team Prompt peer specialists to share change agent perspectives with organizational leaders, managers, supervisors, non-peer staff, and people receiving services Offer peer specialists professional development, career advancement, and leadership opportunities based on their role as a change agent Compensate peer specialists according to the complexity of the change agent position, not the academic credentials of the applicant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all members of the organization understand the role of change agent and support the concept of peer specialists as "disruptive innovators" Choose a champion within the leadership team who is responsible for the implementation of peer services who will recognize and support disruptive innovations that come from those in the peer specialist role Revise or write policies and procedures acknowledging, supporting, and upholding individual and system advocacy that challenges the status quo Work with HR, hiring supervisors, and peer support advisors to define and develop the unique peer specialist role within the organization Make peer support a choice for all people receiving services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize contributions made by peer specialists who serve on advisory boards or work toward changing the system for their valued role as change agents Read the writing of Pat Deegan, "Peer Staff as Disruptive Innovators" Use communication channels to funders, researchers, insurance companies, providers, and other key stakeholders, describing the efforts of peer specialists and help them connect with local, regional, state, and national advocacy centers that can assist them as agents of change Consult Bazelon Center Resource Center Review National Association of State Mental Health Directors (NASMHD) Change Agent Series Be familiar with the Core Qualities of a Change Agent Include in requests for proposals (RFP) for human service grants that involve services to people with mental health, trauma, or substance use conditions a minimum required number for staff and advisory

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Priorities for this Workshop

- 1 Value the role of peer specialists as disruptive innovators
- 2 Raise wages equivalent to other support and service roles
- 3 Increase number of peer specialist jobs
- 4 Create career opportunities for members of marginalized communities
- 5 Fund leadership roles that do not require advanced degrees

- 6 Expand opportunities to build skill in supervision and management
- 7 Assure supervisors identify as peer specialists or have training in peer practices
- 8 Provide trauma-informed workplaces and services
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- 10 Provide resources to increase technical skills for telehealth peer support

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What Can I Do?

Identify the stakeholder group that **best** represents you.

For the chosen priority, identify an action you can take to advocate for change.

Complete this sentence:
“One thing I can do is...”

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Top Ten Priorities: An Action Agenda

1	Value peer specialists' roles and perspectives as disruptive innovators; empower peer specialists as essential drivers of systemic change throughout human services.
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3	Increase the number of, and respect for, peer specialist jobs, fields of practice, and roles throughout the human services sector.
4	Intentionally create and promote career opportunities for members of historically marginalized communities, including BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities.
5	Establish designated funding for the creation of supervisory and advanced leadership roles for peers, not dependent on having advanced degrees or another license, certificate, or similar credential.
6	Expand training opportunities for peer specialists to build skills in supervision, management, and leadership.
7	Assure that all peer specialists are supervised by a person who either identifies as a peer themselves or has extensive training in peer values and practices.
8	Provide trauma-informed workplaces, as well as trauma-informed services.
9	Elevate and emphasize wellness as a necessary component in successful workplaces; grant peer specialists time and resources to support their personal wellness needs.
10	Increase opportunities for peer specialists to develop technological skills and provide resources necessary to utilize and access tools for providing telehealth support.

Debrief

- 1) Review the ideas generated by each stakeholder group.
- 2) Discuss the advocacy strategies that were recommended for this priority by the peer support workforce in the Action Agenda (next slide).
- 3) Note any new strategies identified by this group.
- 4) Continue to other stakeholders and discuss advocacy strategies
- 5) Before ending, ask the group to choose the top 3 advocacy strategies they could do.

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Priority 6: Expand training opportunities for peer specialists to build skills in supervision, management, and leadership

PEER SPECIALISTS	SUPERVISORS	EMPLOYERS	POLICY MAKERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring the peer viewpoint to every facet of the job; describe job to people; recruit new members to the peer workforce Help general public learn more about peer support (share your own recovery story in public places; talk about how people benefit from peer support without breaking confidentiality) Discuss different aspects of your lived experience (lived or living in poverty, trauma, homeless, justice-involved, crisis, etc.) with team members Demonstrate what trauma-responsive means; educate supervisor and interdisciplinary team Identify continuing education needed to best serve the population or the organization (when assuming a leadership role) Advocate to attend peer conferences where the latest innovations are being shared by peer practitioners and supervisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop or bring peer-led leadership training into the organization Recognize peer specialists and non-peer leaders that graduate from the peer-led leadership training with increased compensation Provide on-the-job opportunities for peer specialists to receive mentorship, learn skills, and demonstrate practical leadership in supervision, management, and/or leadership Give peer specialists the opportunity to attend Social Security benefits advisement training to support people in who receive benefits to determine best options for work and advancement opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a commitment to grow the peer specialist role and workforce Invest in younger peer specialists as leaders Create an "in house peer specialist" position to work with anyone anywhere within the organization dealing with stress who is in need of peer support (as a fellow employee of the organization) to develop recovery and self-care strategies Sponsor internship or apprenticeship opportunities for peer specialists or volunteers (including those receiving services) seeking employment as peer specialists Work with Vocational Rehabilitation or Supported Employment programs to recruit and support people who are seeking employment with an interest in becoming peer specialists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote organizations that have made the commitment to leadership through lived expertise as exemplary programs Provide scholarships for peer specialists and supervisors to attend peer conferences where the latest innovations are being shared by recognized peer practitioners and supervisors Work with funders on the development of peer-led programs to train supervisors and trainers Establish apprenticeships or internships that allow peer specialists in training to earn while they learn

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Priority 7: Assure that all peer specialists are supervised by a person who either identifies as a peer themselves or has extensive training in peer values and practices.

PEER SPECIALISTS	SUPERVISORS	EMPLOYERS	POLICY MAKERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite supervisors to regularly share relevant aspects of their own lived experience Ask what is most important to and for the supervisor during co-reflective supervision Use supervision as an opportunity for sharing values and practical approaches to peer specialist competencies Ask the supervisor and non-peer staff to shadow the peer specialists on the job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate having an attitude of appreciation for the opportunity to work with (and learn from) peer specialists; not view it as "extra work" Create a "handbook" for peer specialists about getting the most out of supervision Create a network for supervisors to regularly meet with other supervisors Seek feedback from experienced peer professionals on essential skills for peer specialists to grow into the supervisor role Work with peer specialist staff to create supervision co-reflective practices Develop a succession plan for peer specialists who are moving into the supervisory role (help the next person achieve all they can) Develop "best practices" for the supervision of peer specialists and share them with other organizations that provide peer support services Assure adequate supervisory time for supervision of peer specialists Gather stories from peer specialists (organize them for the leadership team, board, web site, newsletter, public relations, grant funding, reporting, etc.) to share hopeful, uplifting communications to promote peer support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit to hiring or advancing supervisors with prior experience as peer specialists (Refer to new CMS Guidance regarding the interpretation of supervisor qualifications as a competent mental health professional to include experienced peer specialists added in June 2024) Require current non-peer supervisors (within a reasonable time) to complete the same training as the peer specialists took to become certified Contract with peer-run organizations to provide supervision for non-peer supervisors Create a succession plan for peer specialists to take on supervisory roles traditionally filled by non-peer supervisors Establish a "peer-run division" within the organization and prioritize supervision for peer specialists by peer specialists Provide incentives for non-peer supervisors to attend peer conferences to better understand the core values and "peer ethos" from recognized peer practitioners Create a work environment that is safe for clinicians and other service providers to disclose their own lived experiences without negative career consequences Exchange supervisors with other organizations (trade places with other supervisors to learn about how supervision is done in different locations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and require supervisors of peer specialists to complete a state-approved "supervision certification" before peer support services supervised by the person can bill Medicaid Create minimum standards for a "supervision certification" training to be 1) in person- not just "book knowledge"; 2) facilitated by peer specialists; 3) informed by those who created the state certification program for the peer specialists with required re-certification (every 2 years) Create infrastructure and fund the coordination of regional, state, and national networks for supervisors of peer specialists to regularly meet with other supervisors Continue to fund technical assistance centers like SAMHSA's Peer Recovery Center of Excellence (PRCoE) and Doors to Wellbeing as resources for supervisors Fund research and development of best practices for supervisors, including how they support peer values and competencies, create role definitions and job descriptions, manage multidisciplinary teams, determine and train on the tools peer specialists use, and promote recovery practices, trauma awareness, and cultural responsiveness Establish workforce development teams between government (federal, state, local) and academic institutions to offer opportunities for peer specialists to receive college credit for relevant lived experience to expedite professional advancement (governmental entities have the capability to establish workforce development programs) Create an exchange program for supervisors of peer specialists (traveling supervisors who trade places with others to learn how supervision is done in other locations)

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Summary

You should now be able to:

1. Recall the 10 priorities identified by the peer workforce
2. Recognize at least one recommendation you can personally get involved with
3. Name strategies for advocacy with different stakeholders
4. Use and share the Action Agenda with others for future advocacy work

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Questions?

Are there any questions?

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Contact Information



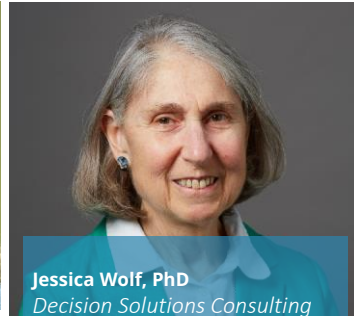
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