



Peer Support

Kristy Johnson- Peer Support Administrator

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Peer Support encompasses a range of activities and interactions between people who share similar experiences of numerous walks of life such as traumatic brain injuries, mental health conditions, substance use etc.

Peer Support offers a level of acceptance, understanding, and validation not always found in professional relationships. By sharing their own lived experience and practical guidance, peer support workers help people develop their own goals, create strategies for self-empowerment, and take concrete steps towards building fulfilling, self determined lives for themselves.

Peer Support Services are essential ingredients in developing a Recovery oriented system, and go beyond the elimination or reduction of symptoms to self actualization, community, and overall wellness.

What is Peer Support?

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The role of a Peer Support Specialist...

- Advocate for individuals in recovery
- Share resources and build skills
- Build community and relationships
- Mentor and set goals
- Offer guidance and support
- Play a vital role on care team
- Assist participants in figuring out what their pathway/journey to wellness looks like
- Providing different perspectives to the care team
- Cheerlead for one's success!



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Peer Support, how did this come about?

Jean Baptise Pussin, Governor of Bicentre Hospital in France 18th century had a unique idea of bringing back previous “patients” to help with current “patients.” The outcome was to say the least, beautiful. He was credited with employing recovered patients to assist in the care of patients still undergoing treatment.

In utilizing peoples’ lived experiences and empathy to assist in the care of others, Pussin helped create a “moral treatment” in opposition to what was the mainstream reliance on isolation when treating mental health.

Modern peer support in the United States solidified as a mental health resource in the 1960’s and 70’s, when thousands of patients suffering from serious mental illness were released from state hospitals back into communities without adequate support infrastructure in place to receive them.

Now peer support is a ubiquitous presence across the spectrum of treatment and recovery programs, in the form of self help and support groups, peer-run services like community run organizations and limitless other realms.

Just as important is societal change, attitudes around mental health, addiction and recovery have evolved tremendously over the past 50 years, informed in no small part by the expansive cultural and clinical impact of peer support.

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Peer Support in North Dakota

During the 66th Legislative assembly a few years back, senate bill 2012 was passed giving the Behavioral Health Division authority to develop and implement Peer Support services, trainings, and Peer Certification.

North Dakotas 1st official state hosted Peer Support training was held in 2018, and since that we have trained over 800 individuals.

In July of 2020, Peer Support Certification was implemented to professionalize the valuable work of Peers. We currently have 198 certified peer support specialists, and roughly 95% of them are employed.

Peer Services are currently a reimbursable service through numerous ND programs such as Free Through Recovery, Community Connect, the 1915i and SUD Voucher. Peer Support is also reimbursable through BCBC, and Medicaid.



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Peers in North Dakota work in all sort of realms!

- Behavioral Health Rehabilitation
- Peer run organizations
- Emergency Departments/First Responder teams
- Online or Telehealth recovery support services
- Criminal Justice system
- Community Behavioral Health organizations

There are currently over 30,000 Peer Support specialists providing services in the U.S!

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What initiatives have assisted with the implementation of Peer Support, and on-going growth?

Substance Use Disorder Voucher Peer support/Recovery Support service is reimbursable	Free Through Recovery Peer support services are included with programming.	Community Connect Peer support services are included with programming.
1915i Services Peer Support/Family Peer support included with programming	On going Peer Support trainings	Reoccurring online connection meetings for Peers, and Supervisors.
On going education for providers and agencies	Medicaid/BlueCross BlueShield recognize and honor Peer Support reimbursement	

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Peer Support Specialist Core Training

The Behavioral Health division contracts with Appalachian Consulting group to host 40-hour trainings. Appalachian Consulting is nationally recognized in leading peer support trainings. These trainings cover vital core competencies needed to formalize peer service work.

Trainings are held roughly 4 times a year, in person across the state, with occasional virtual options. There is an application process with priority to those who have pending employment.

There is NO cost to attend Peer Support training, and we arrange hotel accommodations and mileage reimbursement if traveling from out of town ☺ (Over 60 miles)



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Through Peer Support specialist training, peers learn many awesome skills!

- Motivational interviewing skills
- To use their recovery story intentionally
- The importance of self care
- Boundaries and Ethics
- Trauma aware services
- Shared decision makings skills
- How to administer Narcan
- Effective Listening
- How to utilize problem solving processes with peers
- How to become Certified
- Collaborating with other agencies and community entities
- How to stay connected!



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Peer Support Specialist Certification

There are currently over 190 Certified Peers in North Dakota!

Peer Support Certification professionalizes and standardizes the valuable work of Peer Support Specialists. Certified Peer Support Specialists must commit to the North Dakota Peer Support Specialist Code of Ethics, maintain required CEU's, and stay connected ☺

Each person that attends PS training qualifies for Peer Support Certification, which is an online application process.

North Dakota has 2 levels of Peer Support Certification:

Certified Peer Support Specialist I
Certified Peer Support Specialist II

Level II requires 1500 hours of direct Peer Support and is essentially more of a supervisory level of certification.

All Peers that provide services in any state funded program **MUST** be certified within 90 days of being hired at an agency, if not already.

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Opening and ongoing trainings...

Peer Support Specialist Training:
 Bismarck in person: May 15th- 19th, 2023... August: Virtual.... December 11-15 Fargo in Person.

"Peer Support Ethics" hosted by Bold North Recovery

Reoccurring online connection meetings for Peer Support Specialists, as well as supervisors of Peer Supports!

Prerecorded:
 Integration and Supervision of Peer Support Services: Approved for 4 CEU hours for ND Certified Peer Support Specialist I and II, as well as LAC's and Social Workers.

Peer Support Ethics and Values in the workplace

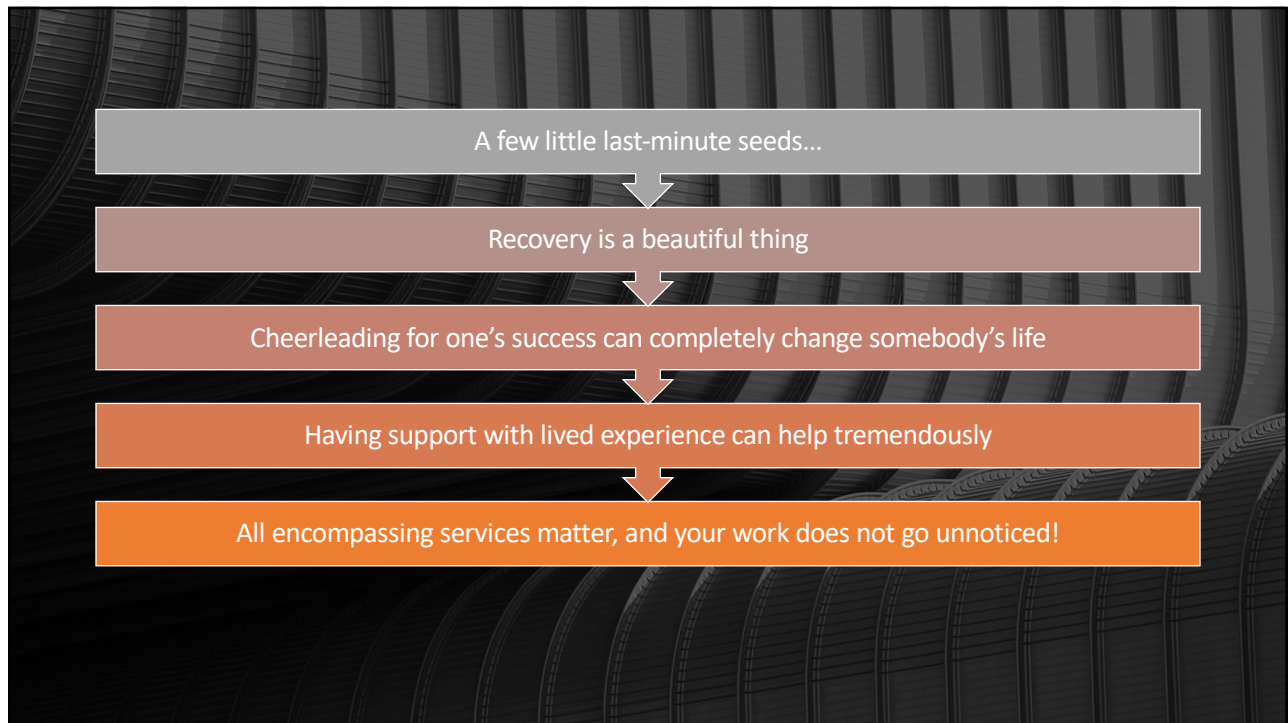


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How to become a Peer Support Specialist:



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Q & A

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