

The Emerging Role of Peers in Providing Supported Employment

Peer Pathways

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Goals for Today:

- Review the importance of employment as a path to recovery
- What is mean by “Peer Services” in this area?
- Examples of Peers delivering Supported Employment/employment help in several states.
- Tools for helping
- Discussion

What Do We Know About The Importance of Employment?

- Unemployment in the general population correlates with illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, lack of social connection and other adverse outcomes.
- People with serious mental illness are unemployed at shockingly high rates, exceeding 85% in some states. (NRI, Uniform Reporting System)
- Studies have shown that median years of potential life lost for people with mental illness was 10 years (n = 24 studies)
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2110027?jamanetworkreader=true>
- **Employment is a health intervention. Where they exist, correlational studies have found reduced healthcare spending for people as their employment increases.**

How are we doing with helping people with mental illness in the public mental health system to gain employment?

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Uniform Reporting System 2017

- **National average: 21% employed (and this reflects any employment, not just full time)**
- **Or to put it another way: 79% UNEMPLOYED**

Expressed Interest in Employment Reported in 10 Surveys

Study	%	Survey Population
Rogers (1995)	71%	statewide survey of people with mental illness
Bedell (1998)	69%	sheltered workshop participants
Mueser (2001)	61%	study of family intervention
McQuilken (2003)	55%	clubhouse members
Drebing (2004)	53%	veterans in a VA-sponsored vocational program
Woltmann (2009)	70%	clients in psychiatric rehabilitation program
Frounfelker (2011)	72%	clients with co-occurring substance use
Ramsay (2011)	78%	young adults experiencing early psychosis
Wescott (2015)	77%	community survey of people with schizophrenia
Knaeps (2015)	45%	psychiatric inpatients
Mean	65%	

Social Determinants of Health

- Social status
- Stress
- Nutrition
- Employment
- Income
- Safe place to live
- Social support networks

Social determinants of health, 2nd ed., Edited by Michael Marmot and Richard Wilkinson. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2006.

Modifiable Risk Factors (SAMHSA HRSA)

- Smoking, weight, inactivity
- Lack of access to care
- Social isolation/vulnerability/violence
- Medication/polypharmacy
- Unemployment/poverty
- Separate silos of care

How Might Work Affect the Modifiable Risk Factors?

- Smoking/weight/inactivity: can't smoke at work; need to move around to get to job
- Social inclusion/vulnerability/violence: More access to community, chances to make friends
- Unemployment/poverty: Working is a way to get \$\$!!
- **Careful benefits planning is critical.**

Types of Peer Support Overview

- Certified Peer or Recovery Specialists: State oversight; testing to qualify; Sometimes Medicaid billing by providers for Peers, sometimes state \$; integrated into the “traditional” mental health system, CMHCs.
- Free standing Consumer Operated Programs: Drop-In Centers; Wellness Centers; Respite
- People with lived experience who are working in volunteer or paid positions in many settings.

Scope of Practice

- Varies by state and refers to what Certified Peers are expected and permitted to provide.
- Concerns supervision, training, and administration
- Also continuing education and specific training for particular roles.

Washington

Peer support

- The Health Care Authority's (HCA) Peer Support Program trains and qualifies behavioral health consumers as certified peer counselors (CPCs). By "behavioral health" we mean both mental health and substance use disorder consumers.
- A "consumer" is someone who has applied for, is eligible for, or who has received mental health or substance use disorder services. This also includes parents and legal guardians when they have a child under the age of 13 and they are involved in their treatment plan (WAC 388-865-0150).
- 40 hour training

Missouri

- Missouri Division of Behavioral Health has over 817 Certified Peer Specialists (CPS) active in the treatment and recovery system.
- CPS work in both mental health and substance use disorder treatment programs as members of the treatment teams, in emergency rooms as Recovery Coaches, in state hospitals, in Recovery Community Centers, in Recovery Support Services, in Consumer Operated Drop-In Centers, and on Warm Lines providing peer phone support services.

The Missouri Peer Support Service in the treatment programs consists of:

- Helping individuals connect with other consumers and their communities at large in order to develop a network for information and support;
- Sharing lived experiences of recovery, sharing and supporting the use of recovery tools, and modeling successful recovery goals;
- Helping individuals to make independent choices and to take a proactive role in their recovery;
- Assisting individuals with identifying strengths and personal resources to aid in their setting and achieving recovery goals;
- Assisting individuals in setting and following through on goals;
- Supporting efforts to find and maintain paid competitive integrated employment; and
- Assisting with health and wellness activities.

Missouri Peer Support Service (Continued)

- The four Recovery Community Centers have peer employment specialists on staff paid from the State Opioid Response grant funding. In three months, they have assisted 51 individuals to become employed.
- The mental health Drop-In Centers are required by contract to provide “Activities to develop skills for employment and everyday life” and “The contractor shall develop a community resources list/guide that can be provided to consumers. The resource list/guide shall include, but is not limited to: Supported employment services.” The monthly reports include “An unduplicated and duplicated count of individuals receiving employment services.”

Illinois Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CRSS) Credential

- The Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CRSS) is a credential for those who provide mental health or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse recovery support to others. A person with the CRSS credential uses unique insights gained through personal recovery experience.
- The CRSS credential assures competence in advocacy, professional responsibility, mentoring, and recovery support. Persons with the CRSS credential are employed specifically to use their personal recovery experiences to facilitate and support the recoveries of others and to help shape the mental health system.
- Persons with their CRSS infuse the mental health system with hope and empowerment, and improve opportunities for others to:
 - Develop hope for recovery.
 - Increase problem solving skills.
 - Develop natural support networks.
 - Participate fully in life in the community.

Illinois Certified Recovery Support Specialist - Employment Endorsement

“The CRSS-E is specifically developed for professionals who are competent in the CRSS-E domains and who possess enhanced abilities to assist individuals with mental health conditions in obtaining and maintaining competitive employment.

The CRSS-E provides a process by which professionals can demonstrate competencies in providing IPS Supported Employment services.

To obtain this seal of endorsement, applicants must be Certified Recovery Support Specialists and can provide proof that they are certified in good standing.”

Illinois (Continued)

“This professional endorsement is competency based, meaning the minimum standards for the CRSS-E are the fidelity items identified for the profession.

The competencies are specific to IPS Supported Employment services.

The CRSS-E recognizes paid work experience and/or internships and education as means to acquiring the competencies to provide supported employment services”

Illinois (Continued)

The following chart details the minimum requirements for the CRSS-E based on work experience, supervised practical experience, and training/education:

Required Work Experience	Supervised Practical Experience	Training/Education	Certification Requirements
6 months (1,000 hours) qualified work experience and/or internship	25 hours	Successful completion of the IPS Supportive Employment Practitioner Skills Training	A current CRSS in good standing with the Illinois Certification Board.

Some States Require Peer Specialist on IPS (Supported Employment) Teams

- The SAMHSA Supported Employment Grant – 5 year grant to 7 states ending this year – required Peers to be included on IPS teams.
- Peer staff have paths to career advancement

Discussion

- What is your experience of giving or getting Peer Support related to employment?
- What was special about it?
- What challenges did you encounter?