

BRSS TACS

Bringing Recovery Supports to Scale

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER STRATEGY

Supervision of Peer Workers

Introduction

Peer support services have expanded to a wide variety of behavioral health environments and within a range of program models. In addition to providing recovery support services designed to engage, activate, and support people with behavioral health conditions and their family members, peer workers are emerging as important members of treatment teams. Organizations that include peer workers and provide peer support services want to know how to best supervise peer workers and integrate them into their workforce. Because peer support services represent a relatively new service within behavioral health services, there may be too few supervisors who understand the peer role well enough to supervise peer workers. This group of resources helps supervisors understand how to supervise peer workers in behavioral health services.



Audience

This group of resources is primarily for practitioners who are supervising peer workers.

Components

This group of resources consists of the following components:

- *Slide Deck with Trainer Notes:* A PowerPoint presentation with trainer notes is the main component of these resources. The 48-slide deck presents an overview of peer worker supervision. Each slide has notes for the trainer delivering the presentation.
- *Supervisor Self-Assessment:* This one-page self-assessment tool enables supervisors to evaluate their own knowledge and skills related to supervising peer workers in behavioral health settings.
- *Supervision Resource List:* This one-page list contains critical resources for future learning about the supervision of peer workers in behavioral health.

Learning Goals

1. Describe the essential functions of supervision
2. Understand the principles and practices of peer support
3. Explore a recovery-oriented approach to the supervision of peer workers
4. Learn two critical supervision skills
5. Access additional resources to improve competency in peer worker supervision

Using the Supervision of Peer Workers

BRSS TACS created these materials to assist practitioners who supervise peer workers. Trainers can use the Supervision of Peer Workers as part of their own curriculum or students can use these tools in their own self-directed study.

Trainer-Led Instruction:

An experienced trainer can present the slide deck using the trainer notes in a 2-hour training (or two 1-hour trainings) for the basic instruction. Trainers can expand the training by including time to practice the skills of “giving feedback” and “giving strengths-based affirmations.” The trainer may also assign the readings included in the resource list and facilitate discussions about the information learned.



Self-Directed Study:

Students can study the PowerPoint presentation and resources independently or in small groups of practitioners without a lead trainer. This self-directed approach enables practitioners to learn the information on their own schedule, at their own pace. Students can use the lessons learned in self-directed study to practice their supervision skills.

Use the **Supervisor of Peer Workers Self-Assessment** tool as a pre- and post-test for both the trainer-led and self-directed study and as an ongoing assessment of supervisors’ progress in learning the knowledge and skills required for the supervision of peer workers.

Want more information?

BRSS TACS has conducted virtual trainings on topics related to the supervision of peer workers. Here are links to recording trainings available online:

- **Recovery LIVE! Strategies for Supervising Peer Support Workers**
(April 2017, 58 min)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v49QD-UaQK4&list=PLBXgZMI_zqfSRZVtxRBWg7cDja_qy2e-M&index=5
- **Integrating Peers into the Workforce: Supervision and Organizational Culture**
(March 2016, 85 min)
<https://center4si.adobeconnect.com/a966410469/p2k7kf5dxi9/?launcher=false&fcsContent=true&pbMode=normal>

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Please share your thoughts, feedback, and questions about this publication by emailing BRSSSTACS@c4innovates.com. Your feedback will help SAMHSA develop future products.