

Breaking Down Barriers and Implementing Effective Strategies for Peer Workforce Integration: A Position Paper

Prepared by the IRIS Recovery Research Fellowship

PAPER SYNOPSIS

As a vital part of the substance use recovery support system, peer delivered services have been associated with numerous benefits for people who use drugs. As numbers of peers have grown across settings, barriers to peer workforce integration (PWI) have become evident, creating strain on peers, and impeding full maximization of peer-derived benefits. This position paper examines components of effective PWI, barriers to its implementation, and strategies to address these obstacles. This inquiry was conducted by IRIS (Innovations in Recovery through Infrastructure Support) university staff and a diverse group of 17 Fellows, consisting of peers, clinicians, managers, and academics learning about peer-focused, community-engaged recovery research. The paper is grounded in Fellows' practice and lived experience, a review of academic and grey literature, and themes derived from interviews with 9 key peer recovery stakeholders.

Effective PWI may be defined as fostering a culture of mutual respect, creating clarity around peer roles, and providing wages and benefits aligned with peers' value. Below is a chart that outlines the identified barriers and strategies we gathered from our knowledge sources. As calls for greater PWI are made and resources allocated to meet this demand, it is imperative to conduct this expansion effectively in a way that honors peers' value and supports their well-being. This peer-centered, research-based position paper may be used to inform organizational and systemic PWI, inter-disciplinary advocacy efforts, and further research with a full national scope, as Fellows' and stakeholders' perspectives were primarily Maryland-based.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE PEER WORKFORCE INTEGRATION	STRATEGIES TO EFFECTIVE PEER WORKFORCE INTEGRATION
Unrecognized research-based benefits of peer services	Build on evidence base for peer recovery services
Lack of clarity on the peer role	Create mechanisms for interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration Prepare both peers and organizations for PWI in newer work settings
Stigma towards peers	Enhance education and advocacy on peer role and approach Support for peers through peer-delivered supervision
Poor unsustainable funding	Spur greater financial security for peer positions
Lack of centralized coordination for the peer profession	Develop entities and initiative to provide unified support for PWI

Additional Resources for Effective PWI

TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS & OTHER RESOURCES

Jordan Peer Recovery

<https://jordanpeerrecovery.com/>

Voices of Hope Maryland

<https://voicesofhopemaryland.org/>

On Our Own Maryland

<https://www.onourownmd.org/s/>

3C Recovery Support Training Institute

<https://3crecoverytraininginstitute.org/>

Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR)

<https://ccar.us/programs/recovery-coach-programs/>

Peer Recovery Training and Support Services

<https://www.peerrecoverysupport.com/>

Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)

<https://www.wellnessrecoveryactionplan.com/wrap-and-peer-support-a-powerful-combination/>

ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

Maryland Peer Advisory Council

<https://www.marylandpeeradvisorycouncil.org/>

Voices of Hope Maryland

<https://voicesofhopemaryland.org/>

On Our Own Maryland

<https://www.onourownmd.org/s/>

Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition

<https://baltimoreharmreduction.org/>

Faces & Voices of Recovery

<https://facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/>

National Association of Peer Supporters

<https://www.peersupportworks.org/>

PUBLIC AGENCY LEADERS IN MARYLAND

BHA's Office of Consumer Affairs

<https://health.maryland.gov/bha/Pages/Consumer-Affairs.aspx>

Office of Harm Reduction Services

<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/Pages/accessharmreduction.aspx>

SAMHSA Office of Recovery

<https://www.samhsa.gov/about-us/who-we-are/offices-centers/or>

Maryland's Opioid Operational Command Center

<https://beforeitstoolate.maryland.gov>

Maryland Community Health Resources Commission

<https://health.maryland.gov/mchrc/Pages/home.aspx>

TOOLKITS AND OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES ALSO AVAILABLE FROM:

- New York State
- City of Philadelphia
- Veteran's Affairs
- SAMHSA, Value of Peers
- SAMHSA, Supervision of Peer Workers