

# Supervising Peers – a love story.

How to successfully support a peer team

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The state of Arizona defines peers as:

**Peer:** An individual who is, or has been, a recipient of behavioral health services and has an experience of recovery to share.

**Peer/Recovery Support Specialist Qualifications** i. Individuals seeking certification and employment as Peer/Recovery Support Specialists must: (1) Self-identify as a “peer”; and (2) Meet the requirements to function as a behavioral health paraprofessional, behavioral health technician, or behavioral health professional.

There are 3 main strategies used to successfully supervise persons working as peer supports:

1. Provide a recovery-oriented workplace using the 9 principles of recovery.
2. Show commitment to peer support in all roles and at all levels of the organization.
3. Provide quality supervision and accommodations in a supportive environment.

Having a supportive supervisor is key. Best practice would be to have a qualified peer support specialist supervise the peer team. The supervisor should be supporting the peers through every stage of employment, including the interview process; orientation; coaching and mentoring; working wellness; when challenges occur; and time away from work.

There are many reasonable accommodations that will benefit peers and ensure they have a chance to thrive at work. Some are:

Provide day-to-day guidance and feedback,

Develop clear expectations of responsibilities and the consequences of not meeting performance standards,

Schedule consistent meetings with employee to set goals and review progress,

Allow for open communication,

Establish written long term and short term goals,

Develop strategies to deal with conflict,

Develop a procedure to evaluate the effectiveness of accommodations.

