
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.