Young Professional Peer Support

Strategies and Recommendations to Strengthen the Next Generation of Behavioral Health Leadership

"Young people don't want to stop at one thing and stay there forever"

Kate Fox, MPH

Temple University Collaborative
On Community Inclusion of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

Table of Contents

www.tucollaborative.org

Suggested Citation: Fox, K. (2021). Young Professional Peer Support: Strategies and Recommendations to Strengthen the Next Generation of Behavioral Health Leadership. Temple University Collaborative on Community Inclusion.

Introduction

This report aims to provide recommendations and strategies to behavioral health organizations, systems, and policymakers, on how to engage the next generation of peer support. These recommendations will:

1. Enhance behavioral health organizations' ability to support young adult peer specialists in the workforce (e.g. provide effective services and supports; increase peer satisfaction; enhance long-term career success);
2. Enhance young adult peer specialists' ability to contribute meaningfully to the behavioral health system of which they are a part;
3. Advance the transformational goal of having peer specialists meaningfully influence the behavioral health system at multiple levels (e.g. program, organizational, system, policy and planning).

Why should we care about young professional peer support?

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts across the county have been renewed in the last year. According to a report from the career website Glassdoor, postings for job titles such as "chief diversity officer," or "diversity and inclusion program manager" fell nearly 60% between March and early June 2020 as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Stansell & Zhao, 2020). Job openings overall fell only 28% in the same time frame, suggesting that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) positions were some of the first to be cut from budgets when companies faced economic hardships (Stansell & Zhao, 2020). However, when George Floyd was killed by a Minneapolis police officer in May 2020, workplaces were reinvigorated to address DEI issues within their own institutions. DEI job postings rose 50% in June 2020 according to Glassdoor, the largest percentage increase over a four-week period since January 2016 (Stansell & Zhao, 2020).

Diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in the workplace are more than just trendy terms. When addressed intentionally, workplace DEI efforts can increase employee retention, job satisfaction, and even improve the performance of the organization [2]. And while the definitions of these terms are fluid and all-encompassing in theory, in practice, workforces tend to focus their efforts on racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. But people with diverse mental health experiences, including those with psychiatric diagnoses, recovery experiences, and developmental disabilities, must be considered and included as workplaces advance increase DEI efforts.

People with mental illnesses are disproportionately unemployed or underemployed when compared with the general population [3]. While the literature supports the importance of work for people with mental health challenges for its economic, mental health, citizenship, and status benefits, the unemployment rate for people with mental illnesses has remained consistently between 75%-85% in the last three decades [4],[5]. Employment has been shown to support an individual's long-term recovery goals. As many as one in five adults in the United States will experience a mental health condition in any one year. Individuals with mental health challenges must be considered and included as workplaces advance DEI efforts.

Young Professionals in the Workforce

In 2016, Millennials surpassed both the Baby Boomers and Generation X to become the largest generation in the United States labor force. The Pew Research Center defines the Millennial

generation as those born between 1981 – 1996. Generation Z, following behind Millennials, are those born between 1997 and 2010, meaning the oldest in this generation are currently 23-24 and are just beginning to enter the workforce. The Baby Boomer generation, once the largest generation to ever exist in the US work force, is now at retirement age and rapidly exiting the workforce, creating a palpable void in leadership positions across all industries. Together, both the Millennial and Gen Z generations are poised to develop professionally and ascend into these vacated positions, but employers must be prepared to meet the unique needs and perspectives of these younger generations.

Millennials became the largest generation in the labor force in 2016

U.S. labor force, in millions
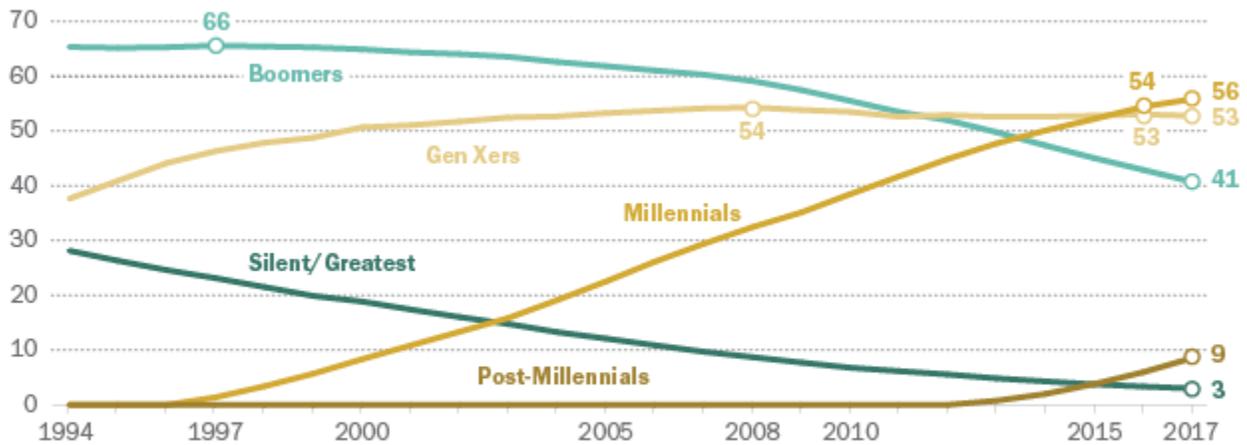
Note: Labor force includes those ages 16 and older who are working or looking for work. Annual averages shown.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of monthly 1994-2017 Current Population Survey (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Additionally, these generations are changing the way people think about mental health and wellbeing. In a report published November 2019, Blue Cross Blue Shield described millennials' declining mental health as a "health shock," and compared its effects to those that the Vietnam War, recreational drug use, and the AIDS epidemic had on previous generations. Major-depression diagnoses are rising at a faster rate for Millennials and Gen Z than for any other age group. The same report found that Millennials have seen a 47% increase in major depression diagnoses. "Deaths of despair," or deaths related to suicide, drugs, or alcohol, are also claiming the lives of Millennials. Nearly half of Millennials have left a job for reasons related to mental health, indicating a "generational shift in awareness." And while Millennials are more likely to seek out treatment options for their mental health, the cost of health care is a burden plaguing Millennials. One in five Millennials diagnosed with major depression will not seek treatment because it is too costly.

Peer Inclusion in the Workforce

Mental Health America acknowledges that, "although peer support is a transformative service, peers are often stuck in low wage jobs with limited room for growth" [6]. Peer support workers report high levels of job satisfaction but report a lack of recognition or appreciation of the peer support role. One national survey of the peer support workforce found that 88.5% of peers are very satisfied or somewhat satisfied in their role, while 40% reported being "not satisfied" with their compensation and 23% were unsatisfied with the level of recognition in their job [7]. The same study also found that

the large majority (92.8%) of respondents were working in direct peer support roles, while only 4% of peers were working in research roles or other administrative roles [7]. This finding reinforces the challenge that peers are only included in the behavioral health system to a certain degree, and that there is more work to be done to advance peer inclusion.

It is critical to engage the next generation of peer support leadership as Baby Boomers exit the workforce en masse. Millennials and Gen Z peer specialists are passionate, forward-thinkers with unique perspectives on ways that our existing structures and systems can be improved. There has been extensive research on the value of peer support and how to support people with lived experience in the workplace, as well as research on Millennials and Gen Z characteristics and preferences, but nothing that combines the unique needs of both young professionals and the peer support workforce. This report aims to capture the enthusiasm and energy of the next generation of peer support leadership to inform behavioral health agencies and policymakers as we advance the development of the peer support workforce.

Development of this Report

To inform these recommendations, interviews were conducted with young professional certified peer specialists and certified autism peer specialists. "Young professional" was defined as age 30 and under, and interviewees needed to have employment in the behavioral health system in some capacity to be eligible to participate. The young professionals who participated worked in a variety of settings, including in direct service roles, training roles, research roles, and administrative roles. Interviews were recorded via Zoom with permission. The themes and recommendations discussed in this report are derived from the interviews conducted between February – July 2021.

One important goal of this project was to include participants not only in interviews, but in the creation of the recommendations so that the resulting report was driven by young professional certified peer specialists. After themes and recommendations were drafted, participants were given the opportunity to review the draft and provided feedback and suggestions before final publication.

Acknowledgements

Emerging Themes

Young professional Certified Peer Specialists wholeheartedly believe in the difference that inclusion can make to the behavioral health workforce, and to the behavioral health system at large.

The peer inclusion movement is alive and well in the younger generations. Some have been influenced by the power of peer support services in their own experiences with behavioral health treatment. Millennials and Gen Z are not disillusioned or cynical about the tenets of peer support and are bought in to the benefit that their experience can offer the behavioral health system. It is crucial that organizations and the system at large value young professional certified peer specialists and encourage the passion that drive their career decisions.

> "
> **[including peer specialists] opens people's minds to better understanding people who are different than them.**

- "You have to put a real value on lived experience, like, it's as simple as that. Once you put a value on, like, you live in this community, you speak the culture, you've been through what this person has been through, like, that's what's invaluable, because everyone doesn't have that. Once that qualifies just as much as, like, you have this diploma, you worked in this field, once that meets that, then I think that we'll have more people."
- "They associate age with power and they associate wealth with power…but that's not who we do this for, we do this for everybody…so our solutions should include everybody."
- "I want to make a change in this field…I don't just want to leave."

There are young professionals with lived experience who are not certified peer specialists, and young professional CPS have ideas about ways to attract young people to the field.

Many of the young professional certified peer specialists mentioned that there is no limit to the number of their colleagues with lived experience. However, there seems to be a missing link between young adults with lived experience and the path to becoming a certified peer specialist. This could be resolved with more exposure to peer support in behavioral health treatment; many people with lived experience won't know that peer support is a viable career path without experiencing the power of peer support in their own recovery journey. Another barrier to certification could be the younger generations' resistance to "the system." Perhaps some young adults do not feel the need to codify their lived experience or that their lived experience does not fit neatly into the requirements of the certification process.

- "I always equate it to athletes…I think the best player in the world is not on any sports team. They're in some community somewhere, there's raw talent, but because they can't fit within the mold of these systems, they're not allowed to utilize their skillsets that they have…I believe that a lot of people are certified peer specialists just because of who they are and the work they want to do, but because there's so much lines and barriers or loopholes that they have to jump through, I think that's what deters them from getting the certification."
- "I think [the training] is expensive. I didn't have to pay for it, but I think it's expensive and then it's only offered at certain times."

8

- "The barriers that keep them other people from going in, I think it's just inferiority, I think it's a complexity of like language, I think it's like, you just don't know what you don't know. You need mentors to help guide individuals to help guide individuals into receiving these different certifications to feel like they are valued in those fields."

Young professional Certified Peer Specialists want to ascend in the workforce, but there are significant barriers to their success.

The young professional certified peer specialists described several barriers to growing professionally in the peer role. Primarily, there was a lack of roles that align with peer support interests beyond direct services. Many spoke about the challenges of speaking two languages: the professional language that is required to be successful in the workforce, and the language of plain, everyday speech. Some attributed this language barrier to the inability to ascend in the workforce. Many peers may already be organically engaged in some type of peer support work, but don't know how to translate the skills that come naturally to the skills described on the certification application or in job descriptions.

> " I've been learning that everything that I've been doing there's like formal like language around and I'm like 'wait, that's what that's called?!?' Like not even knowing that I was already doing some of the work that people put into a course load to make a degree out of.

Language barriers:

o "I'm gonna get my doctor degree…I want to go get the language and then go speak it to the people that don't understand that language, like, uh, dissecting it and breaking it down so that way it's like hey, this is what this means, you already got this like you know this, this is a part of your experience…"

o "I feel way better in a warehouse than I do in [my current job]. I went through a struggle when I first started [my current job] because I felt incompetent, I didn't know some of the words I didn't know some of the language, I just didn't know so much and I felt like…I should quit. I was showing up everyday, but I just felt like I just didn't belong and I felt incompetent to be there…I was in a whole new world."

o "I challenge myself on motivational interviewing in different 'languages' and translate blue collar to white collar sometimes or manipulate my words to reach the person in front of me."

Additionally, jobs that require some level of higher education present barriers to peer specialists' professional growth. Particularly for young professionals who may enter into the peer workforce at much younger ages than other peer specialists, degree requirements present a significant challenge. One young professional certified peer specialist was able to complete their bachelor's degree while working as a CPS, but this was only possible with a ton of support from their parents and their job. Many CPS will not have that level of support or these opportunities to complete higher education to ascend in the field. A key component to the peer movement is valuing lived experience equally to traditional credentials.

When someone with lived experience has the degree to ascend to higher paying roles, the roles for peer support exist very minimally. As young professionals aim for positions beyond the traditional

peer support role, they tend to lose the title and the responsibility of peer support itself. Peers should be able to work in diverse settings with diverse roles without becoming tokenized or sidelined.

- **Degree requirements:**
    - "You need to have certain credentials for them to even consider you."
    - "I feel like I have to get a degree like I don't know if I can advance my career with just my peer specialist certification, like, I still feel like I need that degree to validate my experience"
    - "I know this sounds like I'm putting myself down, but I don't know why my current job hired me…because it did say that you needed to have a degree, and I just applied anyways and I think what they were trying to do is find younger people…and I'm really glad that they took that chance on me because it helped me think well, maybe I can do more things that I thought…I don't know that every peer specialist sort of sees these opportunities."
    - "How do you find something…a job that would value your credential when it doesn't list it?"

Being eager to ascend in the workforce, young professional certified peer specialists generally say yes to any opportunity that presents itself. Younger generations have been conditioned to accept unpaid opportunities for the non-monetary benefits: exposure to leadership, work ethic and reputation, networking, etc. However, these benefits do not necessarily lead to paid opportunities, and, frankly, do not keep food on the table. Millennials were the generation hardest hit by the economic downturn of the pandemic, according to a report by the Pew Research Center. 35% of adults 18-29, and 30% of adults 30-39, say they, or someone in their household, have been laid off or lost a job during the pandemic. Because individuals with mental health challenges are frequently unemployed or underemployed, it is critical to compensate young professional certified peer specialists appropriately, especially for voluntary work that is completed outside of their day-to-day responsibilities. Compensating young adult certified peer specialist for participation on boards, advisory committees, or speaking engagement demonstrates their value to the behavioral health system.

- **Voluntary opportunities that are not compensated**
    - "I think it feels so out of scope of what you actually do that you don't even consider it being a legit skill set. Like if people have to remind me all the time…make sure you're getting paid your worth like don't just lend yourself…like, you can do it, but make sure they're compensating you for it. I forget how valuable it is and people will treat you like that too."

The field lacks clear career options or career pathways for young professional Certified Peer Specialists.

Generally, the field of peer support is fairly limited in career options. This is a particular concern for young professional certified peer specialists who are entering the field at a much earlier stage in their careers than others. Young professionals have the enthusiasm and the dedication to build their career and "climb the ladder," but certified peer specialists are typically relegated to direct support roles. When there are positions that young professional certified peer specialists are interested in and qualified for, they often don't include the CPS credential in the job description and some peers won't

believe they are qualified. Another barrier to career pathways is the degree requirements described previously.

- "My supervisor is a formal peer specialist, and he's a good example of someone who was able to advance, but, like, where do you go beyond that? Directors, you are usually required to have at least a graduate degree. A lot of peers don't have degrees for many reasons…I think this degree thing is kind of limiting…it invalidates the lived experience."
- "I do feel kind of torn because the reason I got into all this is because I, you know, like the experience of directly helping people…but I think that this kind of stuff is where my brain may be better suited because I'm always, even in the direct support levels, I'm always thinking about policy. You think, well, things should just be set up differently…and it feels helpless when you're not able to do much."

> " **There needs to be a career trajectory for peer specialists. I am afraid we're going to lose all of our good people.**

In addition to a lack of career pathways for young professional certified peer specialists, there is a lack of training and professional development opportunities. Because most peers are confined to direct support roles, there are not a lot of opportunities to attend trainings or conferences outside of the billable service hours. Young professional certified peer specialists are dedicated professionals willing to work towards their career goals, but many are not afforded the opportunity in their roles.

- "As far as I understand it a lot of the fault is with the funding structure of Medicaid…the way that Medicaid compensates is basically just like the quantity of units that face-to-face time that the peer specialist spends with the person."
- "I would like to see more opportunity for training and professional development for the peer workers. And again, come up against this thing of like well Medicaid requires continuing education hours per year…employers are reluctant to allow peer workers to go take a training because that is time that has been taken away from producing billable units so they're like, 'we cannot afford to send them.'"
- "…Learning and growing and doing your job…I think it would help us do our jobs better if we had more training."

Young professional Certified Peer Specialists report feeling supported by at least one mentor, supervisor, or colleague, but aren't sure if this is the case for everyone.

> **Another CPS inspired me to be a CPS. It seemed so cool. And right now the question I get a lot is, how do you do what you do and what do I have to do to do that?**

Each young professional certified peer specialist that participated in the development of this report had at least one colleague that supported them in their career. These relationships happened naturally, through work or school or developed through their own experience in treatment. Some of these colleagues help to overcome the aforementioned language barriers, translating lived experience into the duties listed on a job description. Some pushed the young professionals to translate their experiences into the certification and reminded them of the value of their experiences. However, these relationships that helped them ascend are not guaranteed, and there is great concern that other young professionals do not have the same support in navigating their careers.

- "I know, like, other models for like empowering young people...is like having supportive adults, right? So I think in my case, that is the reason that I'm here is that, like people who were older and did have more power and positions like wanted to not only like include me but like help me advance. Instead of expecting me to come in there and already have the degrees and the skills and stuff, they were like, no we value you for your ideas and experiences."

- "[My mentor] was a good hand-holder when it came to like hey you're doing this already, don't let this opportunity slip by you, because you're what this health system needs but like when you hear the PhDs, you hear the masters you hear all of these different things it kind of scares you off and you're like oh no I don't have that "training" training that competes with a doctor and it's like nah, some of these things are just as valuable if not more because you can communicate and relate to the individual."

> **[My mentor] had to go through it and say no, you're doing this, you're doing X, Y, and Z, this is this. And I'm like, oh, I didn't know that and so she had to help me identify the work I was doing and it correlated to what they were asking.**

- "I would have never went for [my current job] if [my mentor] didn't tell me...if I just would of seen if on the job board I just would of skimmed over it. If I just seen it on Indeed I wouldn't ever applied for it. I'm like oh I don't got the degree or I don't got this, like, they probably want this type of person...and so it systematically deters people that could probably fit the mold or could be molded into the individual that they're looking for."

- "I think it feels so out of scope of what you actually do that you don't even consider it being a legit skill set. Like if people have to remind me all the time...make sure you're getting paid your worth like don't just lend yourself...like, you can do it, but make sure they're compensating you for it. I forget how valuable it is and people will treat you like that too."

- "In my first job, there were things that I didn't enjoy about it, but the one things was that they cared about my career and they were like look, this is just a stepping stone, nobody stays here, we will help you advance, just not there because it doesn't exist."

Young professional Certified Peer Specialists want change faster than agencies or institutions can provide.

Younger generations grew up with the internet and are accustomed to having information readily available to them at the push of a button. Social media trends change daily, and it is important for large institutions to stay relevant, reach younger audiences, and adapt to the pace of younger generations. Half of millennials plan to start their own business in the next three years and are eager to be their own bosses. The entrepreneurial spirit of younger generations is due in part to a resistance to navigating bureaucracy and hierarchy. Young professional certified peer specialists may not feel engaged in their programs or in the system as whole and will seek opportunities to leave if they can be financially secure and develop their own path that avoids archaic structures.

> **"**
> **I think the biggest struggle is [the organization] not being nimble enough...like being nimble to be able to like, let's try something different than what we normally try and I think that will always be a big fight...I get it, it's nothing against no big organization...but it's the reason why the taxi company didn't see Uber coming.**

- "I would imagine that might be why young people leave...maybe they don't find opportunities for creating, you know, maybe they want to create change and do things in new ways."
- "As millennials we used to taking a picture and putting it up within two seconds and not like having to go to a board of directors to get approval for that and so I think that is one of the many challenges."
- "You know, we're millennials like, if it ain't moving and I don't see it then you gotta go and I'm moving. I keep so many different opportunities open because I don't want to be stagnant."
- "I was there since October and our Instagram just got up in July. Like we getting ready to put some stuff up on Instagram now and I'm like, 'what took so long?!?!'"
- "A lot of young people don't want to stop at one thing and stay there forever."

Recommendations

As an individual, you can…

Develop mentoring relationships with young professional Certified Peer Specialists:

Many of the folks interviewed cited one or two role models or mentors in their life who pushed them to further their career. These individuals helped to transcend the language barriers discussed and encouraged confidence in young professionals' experiences and expertise. You can help to translate confusing job descriptions or applications into plain language and inspire confidence among emerging leaders.

Provide additional professional development opportunities for young professional Certified Peer Specialists:

Additional opportunities such as reviewing resumes, writing cover letters, learning networking skills, or how to conduct job searches are necessary for young adults starting out in their careers. Like mentoring relationships, these skills expand young professionals' ability to search for jobs that match their skillsets.

As a program or agency, you can…

Examine career pathways within your organization:

Young professionals are ready and willing to work hard and ascend in their careers. While the Millennial generation has received negative attention for job-hopping, organizations can attract and retain talent by providing opportunities to advance within the agency. Young adult CPSs must also be afforded the same opportunities to ascend in their careers.

Review job descriptions and job qualifications:

Question your hiring processes to encourage the value of lived experience across the agency. Many young professionals with the CPS certification do not follow the traditional path to higher education. Consider framing job requirements or qualifications in a manner that reflect the value of lived experience:

- High school diploma and six years of experience OR college diploma and four years of experience OR master's degree and two years of experience.

Consider creative positions for peer support to offer its expertise:

Peers should not be relegated to the lowest paid positions, and each peer brings a diverse skillset to your workforce. Including peer support in creative or "non-traditional" roles, for example, your agency's Human Resources functions or Quality Improvement processes, can bring unique perspectives to the work. As an agency, you can create innovative positions for peers beyond traditional peer support roles. Consider roles such as "peer advocacy consultant" or "director of peer support" that will allow pathways for peers to ascend within the agency while guiding the work from an informed perspective of lived experience.

Create opportunities for young professionals within your agency to connect and collaborate:

Employee resources groups (ERG) or affinity groups are engaging resources for young professionals with shared experiences to connect with one another. These groups foster a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with the organization's mission, vision, and values, and can increase employee engagement and retention. ERGs can be implemented at no cost to your agency and provide voluntary leadership opportunities to the young professionals that choose to participate.

Consider your agency's board composition and leadership composition:
Diversity is not limited to race/ethnicity and gender. Establishing leadership roles, whether on the board or in the agency, that are reserved for individuals with lived experience will create a culture of peer inclusion at your agency. This can provide mentoring opportunities for young professional peer specialists, or leadership opportunities for young professional peer specialists to serve on your board of directors.

Engage young professional certified peer specialists in your agency's social media strategy:

Young professionals have A LOT of creative ideas and ways to engage with others via new and everchanging social media landscapes. Engaging with young professional peer specialists around your agency's social media strategy can provide valuable insights while also creating a leadership opportunity for the young professional.

The behavioral health system can…

Create opportunities for youth to advise the creation of documents, policies, and resources:

One way to reach more young adults who are not trained as certified peer specialists is by engaging the young professional Certified Peer Specialists in communication strategies. Young professionals should be consulted and included on the creation of documents, reports, policies, and other resources that impact the peer support workforce and the behavioral health system at large. Inclusion can engage the next generation of peer support leadership to participate in the behavioral health system.

Develop job opportunities for certified peer specialists that are not strictly fee-for-service roles:

Inclusion of peers at every level of the behavioral health system is paramount to achieving a recovery-oriented system of care. Behavioral health systems can create positions that are policy-oriented or involved with program development that can be filled by peer specialists. Additionally, the behavioral health system can get creative about roles for CPS. Think about roles in Human Resources, quality improvement functions, or training and workforce development that can be driven by peer specialists.

Incentivize peer inclusion in speaking engagements, board appointments, advisory boards, etc.:

Young professional peer specialists report many opportunities to serve on boards or committees, but these opportunities are almost always unpaid. Peer specialists deserve to be compensated for their time and expertise. The behavioral health system can incentivize peer inclusion through contracting opportunities, honorariums, and pay for performance programs.

Provide scholarships or grant opportunities for continuing education:

The behavioral health system can administer grant opportunities to young professional certified peer specialists who serve the system for continuing education credits, the ability to attend conferences or lectures, and even tuition reimbursement for higher education. The goal should be to create career pathways for peers, and the behavioral health system must support peer specialists who are dedicated to our field. Local behavioral health systems could develop partnerships with area colleges and universities to subsidize the cost of higher education for peer specialists.

Develop online peer support programs:

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to re-imagine our world, including the way services are delivered in behavioral health settings. Behavioral health systems should support online peer support programs in conjunction with tele-behavioral health options. Peers can work alongside practitioners for outpatient services or help facilitate online psychoeducation groups or peer support groups. Online programming not only provides more accessible support to those receiving services but can also provide more flexibility and work options for Certified Peer Specialists that can meet the unique needs of individuals with mental health challenges.

Conclusion

It is critical to invest in young professionals' career development throughout the behavioral health system, from the frontline to agency leadership to systems-level administration. This report is meant to provide you with strategies and recommendations for engaging the next generation of peer support leadership. Requests for training, technical assistance, or other inquiries related to this report should be directed to: tucollab@temple.edu

Helpful Resources

[Creating Welcoming Mental Health Work Environments](#)

[Five Tips for Starting an Employee Resource Group](#)

[What your Youngest Employees Need Most Right Now](#)

[Building the Mentally Healthy Workplace: A Strategic Plan for Improving Employer Mental Health Practices](#)

[DBHIDS Peer Support Toolkit](#)

References

1. Stansell A, Zhao D. Diversity Now: How Companies and Workers Are Bringing Nationwide Social Justice Protests to the Workplace - Glassdoor. https://www.glassdoor.com/research/diversity-jobs-reviews/#. Accessed May 17, 2021.

2. Ely RJ, Thomas DA. Getting Serious About Diversity: Enough Already with the Business Case. *Harv Bus Rev*. 2020;98(6):114-122. https://hbr.org/2020/11/getting-serious-about-diversity-enough-already-with-the-business-case. Accessed April 26, 2021.

3. O'Day B, Kleinman R, Fischer B, Morris E, Blyler C. Preventing unemployment and disability benefit receipt among people with mental illness: Evidence review and policy significance. *Psychiatr Rehabil J*. 2017;40(2):123-152. doi:10.1037/prj0000253

4. Baron RC. *The Past and Future Career Patterns Of People with Serious Mental Illness: A Qualitative Inquiry*.

5. Salzer MS, Baron RC, Brusilovskiy E, Lawer LJ, Mandell DS. Access and outcomes for persons with psychotic and affective disorders receiving vocational rehabilitation services. *Psychiatr Serv*. 2011;62(7):796-799. doi:10.1176/ps.62.7.pss6207_0796

6. Position Statement 37: Peer Support Services | Mental Health America. https://www.mhanational.org/issues/position-statement-37-peer-support-services. Accessed June 7, 2021.

7. Cronise R, Teixeira C, Rogers ES, Harrington S. The peer support workforce: Results of a national survey. *Psychiatr Rehabil J*. 2016;39(3):211-221. doi:10.1037/prj0000222