Supervising Peer Support Staff: What does it take?

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Disclaimer

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Welcome!
Laurie Curtis is currently the project director for SAMHSA’s Recovery to Practice initiative and has worked with other SAMHSA projects such as BRSS TACS, the Consumer-Operated Services Program [or COSP] Tool Kit, and she led the development of SAMHSA’s shared decision-making tool on antipsychotic medication and recovery.

Over the years she has supervised peer staff and as a person in recovery herself, received both excellent supervision and mentoring as well as some that was less helpful.
Lyn Legere is a person in long term recovery from substance use and mental health challenges. She has been active in promoting the value of peer support in our behavioral health systems since the early 1980’s.

She was the Director of the Peer Support Training and Certification Program in Massachusetts and is now doing similar work in North Carolina.
The **What’s** and **Why’s** of Supervision
* New Field
* Confusion reported
* Research findings
Supervision that is well implemented is a key component for:

- Highly skilled and supported workforce
- High quality services and positive outcomes
Definition of Supervision

Supervision is a designated interaction between two or more professionals, within a safe and supportive environment, which enables a process of reflective, critical analysis of care, to ensure quality services.

Supervision is about enhancing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of staff.
Administrative

Hours/HR issues
Meeting requirements
Case review
Time management
Documentation requirements
Miscellaneous issues
“Practice”/ Professional Development Mentoring

Practice skills, ways to improve practice, role-modeling, suggestions for further information, etc.
Provide Constructive Feedback

Criticism means I think you have what it takes to do better. It’s actually a compliment!
Supervisor as Guide
Most important...

SUPPORTING POSITIVE OUTCOMES
Requirements of a Supervisor

If you’re not a ZEBRA,
you have to at least KNOW what makes a zebra tick!
Primary Functions of Supervisor

Ensure that job description is consistent with peer role.

Educate others in agency about role & tasks of peer supporter(s).

Help peer staff to be successful in the job.

Recognize ways that agency practices are inconsistent with recovery vision and advocate for change.
Be A Champion

For the worker
For peer staff in the agency
For the peer workforce
For the agency
For people using services
Expectation of the Role: Disclosure of lived experience
Peer Support is **ALWAYS VOLUNTARY**

It cannot be both **MUTUAL** and **MANDATORY**
Traditionally Trained
With Lived Experience
Who Choose to Disclose

Expectations around disclosure, boundaries & therapeutic relationships

Shared Values of Recovery & Resiliency

Peer Support Worker

Expectations around mutuality, sharing, reliance on story
Peer staff are:

- Sharing Occupational Recovery Tools & Strategies
- Reframing our Past
- Moving beyond the Comfort Zone
- Using Self-Help

- Validating Strengths
- Overcoming Fear
- Embracing Hope
- Combating Negative Self-Talk
- Tapping into inner strength and wisdom
Peer staff are not:

Clinicians
Case Managers/Social Workers
Mental Health Workers
Advisors
Sponsor/Spiritual Advisors
Friends
Potential Role Confusion

- Friend
- Clinician/Care Taker
- One of “us” versus one of “them”
- Savior
Supervision

Practice Based Activity

Professionally Led Activity

Personal Therapy

Supervision
✓ Performance

✓ What’s happening in field

✓ Areas for education and professional growth

✓ Relationships with co-workers

✓ Personal wellness (related to work performance only)
Ways of Structuring Supervision

- One-to-one
- Group
- Co-facilitating groups
- Direct observation of interactions
- Video or audio recordings of interactions
- Reviewing documentation
Pitfalls to watch for
#1. Taking on a caretaker role
#2

Acting as clinician
Not so good practices

#3

Setting a Low Bar
Not so good practices

#4
Violation of Peer Specialists Ethics
Not so good practices

#7 Breaching confidentiality
Not so good practices

#8

NO! RESPECT
Finding Success
See a peer staff member as any other employee
Good Practices

#2 Reasonable Accommodations
The biggest risk one can take is to not take one.

― Anonymous

#4 Take some risks
Good Practices

#5 Challenge and support
#6 Collaboration and Partnership
#7 Leadership
Belbin Team Roles Video Scribe: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-efhOLVgEvM


https://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA14-4435/SMA14-4435.pdf


file:///Users/lynlegere/Desktop/Psychology-Board---Submission---Draft-Guideline-for-Supervisors-and-Supervisor-Training-Providers---Queensland-Centre-For-Mental-Health-Learning-Attachment.PDF

AAMFT Supervision Agreement: https://www.aamft.org/Documents/Sample_Supervision_Contract.pdf

Yale University Recovery Self-Assessment:
https://medicine.yale.edu/psychiatry/prch/tools/rec_selfassessment.aspx
Discussion
Thank You

Laurie Curtis  Lyn Legere
Thank You

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