



**ADDRESSING THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
WORKFORCE SHORTAGE WITH PEER SUPPORT**

Today, we'll talk about...

1. California Association of Peer Professionals
2. Behavioral health workforce shortage
3. The value of lived experience in service delivery and systems change
4. Supporting individuals, families, and communities in accessing resources and supports
5. Importance of peers providing peer supervision
6. CAPP recommendations and call to action

Presenter Introductions

- Presenter name
- Current role at CAPP
- Professional background and experience

Attendee Introductions

In the chat box, please tell us:

1. Your name
2. Your role (e.g., peer specialist, supervisor, director etc.)
3. Your California county of residence

PART 1

ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF
PEER PROFESSIONALS (CAPP)

What is CAPP?

A membership-based organization that provides services and benefits to both certified and non-certified behavioral health peer professionals in California, with an emphasis on education, certification, practice guidelines, professional standards, working conditions, and career development.

Membership is currently FREE!

Why CAPP?

- SB 803: Opportunity to elevate field of peer support and organize workforce
- Direct access to a robust, knowledgeable, resourced network of peers across California
- Real-time support in the workplace – for peers and employers
- Need to strengthen and convene peers, peer-run organizations, and stakeholders to advocate on pressing issues at the local, state, and national level

Membership

- Certified and Non-Certified Behavioral Health Peer Support Specialists
- Experienced Peer Support Workers
- New Peer Support Workers
- People Considering a Career in Peer Support

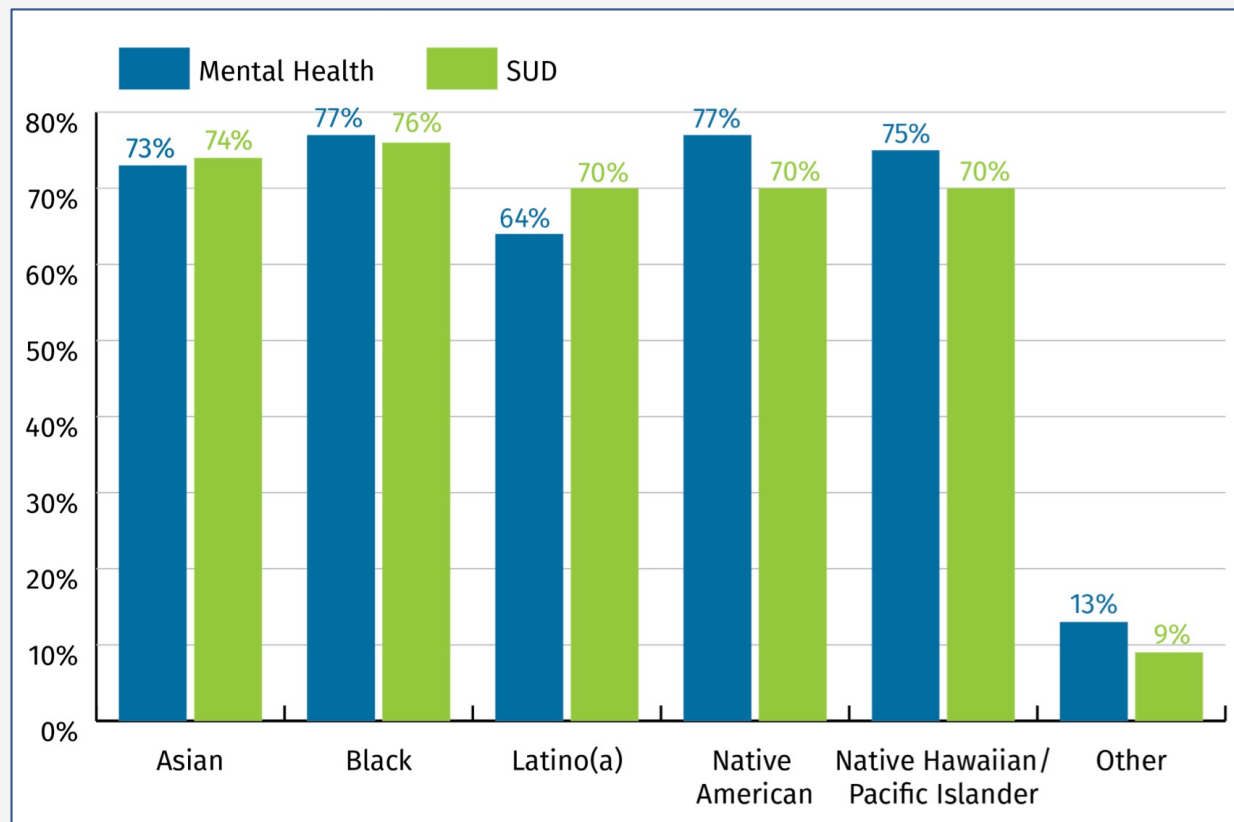
PART 2

Behavioral Health Workforce Shortage

Percentage of County Behavioral Health Agencies that Had Difficulty Recruiting Personnel who Match Clients' Race/Ethnicity, 2021

Source: Building the Future Behavioral Health Workforce: Needs Assessment by Janet Coffman and Margaret Fix.

- Healthforce Center at UCSF | February 2023



Workforce Shortages

- “According to 2022 data, 19% of CSWs, 29% of MFTs, 10% of PCCs, and 34% of educational psychologists are 60 years or older. Age data on psychologists was unavailable at the time of publication.” - [Health Workforce Research Data Center: Annual Report To The Legislature January 2023](#)
- If current trends continue, California will have 41 percent fewer psychiatrists than needed and 11 percent fewer psychologists, licensed marriage and family therapists, licensed professional clinical counselors and licensed clinical social workers than needed by 2028. - [California’s Current and Future Behavioral Health Workforce \(2/2018\)](#)

PART 3

VALUE OF PEER SERVICE AND LIVED EXPERIENCE
IN SERVICE DELIVERY AND SYSTEMS CHANGE

Peers and Peer Support

- Peers are two people who have similar life experiences or come from similar backgrounds; they have Common Lived Experience
 - Lived Experience is the circumstances, situations, and events someone has directly (not vicariously) gone through that carry a particular meaning or significance for them
 - Our cumulative Lived Experience forms the basis of our personal identity, how we see the world, and our place in it
- Peer Support is a system of giving and receiving help based on key principles that include shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful

Intersecting Identities

- Racial and ethnic communities
- LGBTQ+/Two Spirit communities
- Veterans
- Older adults
- Immigrants and refugees
- Foster youth
- Involvement with the criminal legal system
- Unhoused
- Substance Use Recovery

Peer Support Staff are Vital to Program Planning

- By drawing on lived experience, peers understand what works in providing services to key populations
- Peers offer flexibility in creating positive and realistic goals and time frames
- Peers create opportunities for rewarding experiences through intentional planning
- Peers promote reliance on personal decision-making and taking ownership of treatment needs
- Peers are acutely aware potential problem areas in planning and the need for flexibility

Peer Support Staff are Vital to Program Implementation

- Peer reinforce benefit of working through issues and problem-solving by connecting decisions with positive outcomes
- Peers offer support if things don't go according to plan and naturally adapt to unexpected situations
- Peer anticipate potential roadblocks in advance but rely on client decision-making in offering guidance to increase likelihood of positive outcome

Areas Where Peer Support Must Be Utilized

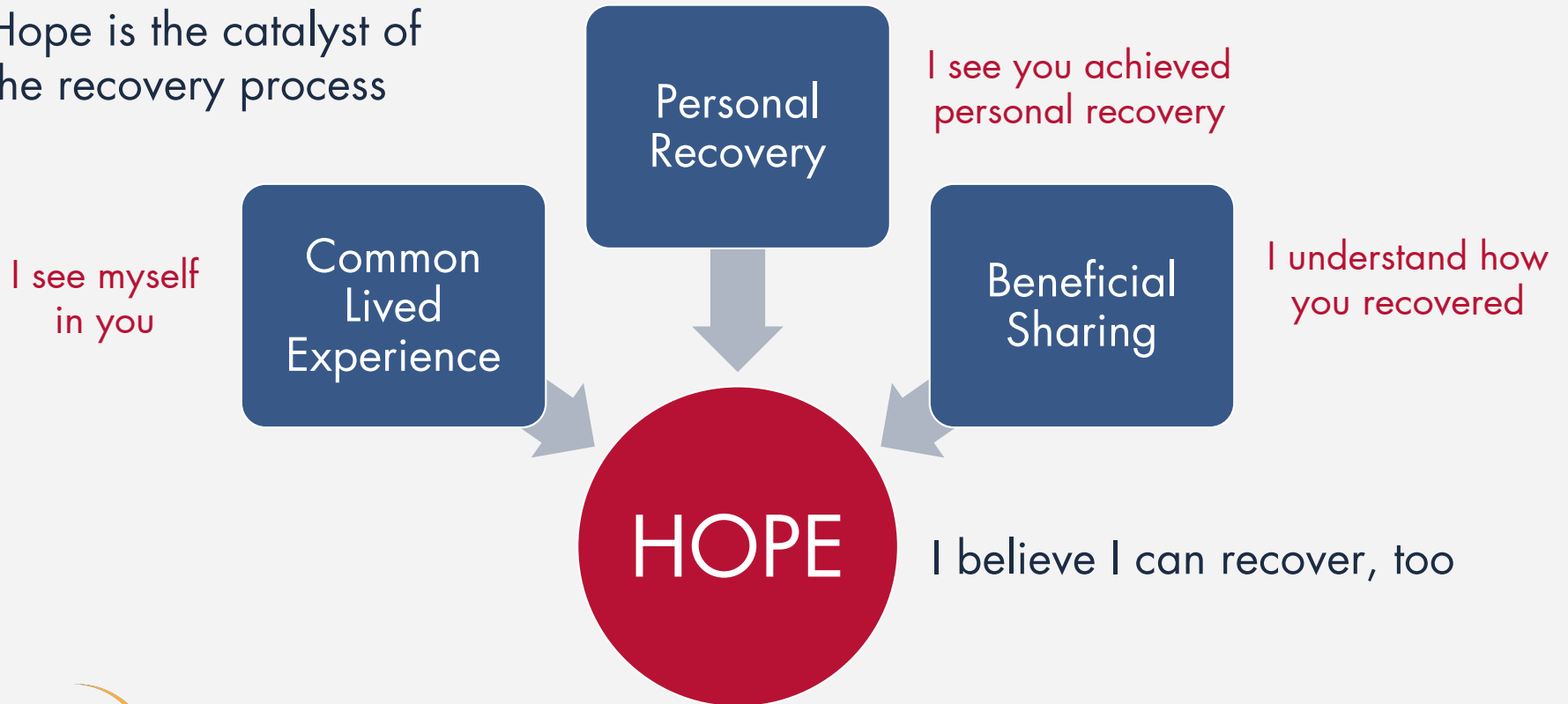
- Navigation throughout delivery of services in all areas and populations: Re-entry, housing, SUD,
- Bridging Peer Support with Community Health Work
- Building Peer Supervisory workforce through specific Peer-led training statewide to build competency
- Developing Career Ladders focused on retaining peer service delivery and peer community building

Areas Where Peer Support Must Be Utilized (cont'd)

- Offering key input in crafting legislation and serving on work groups and committees
- Taking the pulse of the peer community as issues and problems arise
- Work with Family members and reluctant communities
- Maintain networks of Peer Support Staff
- Ensure self-care is integrated into Peer Supporter Lifestyle
- Peers can create county-specific programs to be utilized based on needs

Why It Works (Consumers)

Hope is the catalyst of the recovery process



Why It Works (Family Members)



Put Simply ...

- If you joined the track team, who would you want as your coach?



Simone Biles



Michael Phelps



Usain Bolt

Peer Employment Challenges

- Non-Peer staff may not understand the Peer role
- Peers are often expected to educate others about their role
- It is essential that Peers interact with one another on a regular basis to:
 - share common workplace experiences,
 - strengthen their professional identities,
 - Learn new job skills
 - Receive peer support within their profession

Peer Employment Challenges (cont'd)

- Peers may lack ongoing guidance and support related to their job duties and Peer identities (they are the only Peer on team; they have a non-Peer supervisor)
- Peers may not have mentors or role models within their own organizations and are not given opportunities to seek out, or benefit from social role modeling (i.e. career advancement, skills development, advancing education, etc.)
- No voice in management or leadership decisions

Why Does This Matter?

Peer staff are more likely to be affected by a unhealthy work environment:

- Workers with disabilities
- Overexposed to risks
 - Stigma and discrimination
 - Limited career aspects
 - Pay and benefits
 - Demand-control imbalance
 - Role conflict

Supporting Peers

- Effective Peer Support programs require:
 - A recovery-oriented work culture that values Peers' contributions
 - Dedicated and influential leaders committed to Peer services
 - Supportive managers and supervisors
 - Collaborative working relationships amongst all staff
- Employers must understand Peer Support, the nature of the Peer role, and why it is a unique provider type
- **Best Practice:** Peer Supervisors have lived experience and have worked in a Peer Support Specialist role.

PART 4

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

Effectiveness

Evidence shows Peer Support reduces:

- Number of admissions and days spent in hospitals
- Use of acute services (e.g., ERs/detox centers)
- Substance use
- Depression and demoralization
- Average service costs per person

Effectiveness

Evidence shows Peer Support increases:

- Time in the community
- Engagement in outpatient treatment
- Active involvement in care planning and self-care
- Hope, quality of life, and satisfaction with life
- Rates of family reunification
- Social functioning
- Chances for long-term recovery

CalMHSA Policies: PSS Scope of Work

205. Scope of Work Standards for Certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists

1. A Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist provides peer support services as described below:
 - A. All services must be recovery-oriented, resiliency-focused, culturally appropriate, promote engagement, promote socialization, promote self-sufficiency, promote self-advocacy, promote natural supports and be trauma aware.
 - B. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Services may include:
 1. Promoting recovery, resiliency, wellness, self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, supporting identification of strengths, planning, finding and accessing community resources and services, coaching, mentoring, facilitation, and/or education.
 - C. Services may be provided individually or in a group.

Peer Support Specialist Services

- Peer Support Services include the following service components:
 - **Educational Skill Building Groups:** Providing a supportive environment in which beneficiaries and their families learn coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills in order to help the beneficiaries achieve desired outcomes.
 - **Engagement:** Peer Support Specialist-led activities and coaching to encourage and support beneficiaries to participate in behavioral health treatment.
 - **Therapeutic Activity:** A structured non-clinical activity provided by a Peer Support Specialist to promote recovery, wellness, self-advocacy, relationship enhancement, development of natural supports, self-awareness and values, and the maintenance of community living skills to support the beneficiary's treatment to attain and maintain recovery within their communities.

BHIN 22-026

What Peers Do

- Support groups
- Peer counseling
- Advocacy
- Personal plan creation
- WRAP
- Health education/navigation
- Engagement

- Socialization
- Cultural brokerage
- Service referrals
- Systems navigation
- Benefits
- Crisis intervention
- Develop natural supports

Peer Support Settings

- Counties and Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
- Private health care providers
- Multidisciplinary/wraparound teams
- Wellness centers, clubhouses
- Community outreach, engagement, response teams
- Shelters, supported housing programs
- Court systems, diversion programs, jails/prisons, probation/parole
- ERs, hospitals, inpatient and outpatient clinics
- Schools, colleges, universities
- Warmlines and crisis call centers
- Faith-based activities and organization

Core Competency: Links to Resources

- Peers help others acquire the resources, services, and supports they need to enhance their recovery by linking them to resources or services both within and outside of formal behavioral health services.
- Peers must have knowledge of resources within their communities as well as online resources.

1. Develops and maintains up-to-date information about community resources and services
2. Assists Clients to investigate, select, and use needed and desired resources and services
3. Helps Clients to find and use health services and supports
4. Accompanies Clients to community activities and appointments when requested
5. Participates in community activities with Clients when requested

Core Competency: Provides Information

- Peers coach, model, and teach information and behaviors that enhance recovery.
- Peers have knowledge, skills, and experiences to offer others in recovery, understanding that the recovery process often involves learning and growth.

1. Educates Clients about health, wellness, recovery and recovery supports
2. Participates with Consumers in discovery or co-learning to enhance recovery experiences
3. Coaches Clients about how to access treatment and services and navigate systems of care
4. Coaches Clients in desired skills and strategies
5. Educates Family Members and other supportive individuals about recovery and recovery supports
6. Uses approaches that match the preferences and needs of Clients

Core Competency: Helps Manage Crises

- Peers identify potential risks and use procedures that reduce risks to Clients and others.
- Peers may have to manage situations in which there is intense distress and work to ensure the safety and well-being of others.

1. Recognizes signs of distress and threats to safety among Consumers and in their environments
2. Provides reassurance to Clients in distress
3. Creates safe spaces when meeting with Clients
4. Addresses distress or a crisis by using knowledge of local resources and service and support preferences of individual Consumers
5. Assists Consumers in developing advance directives and other crisis prevention tools

PART 5

IMPORTANCE OF PEERS PROVIDING PEER SUPERVISION

The Non-Peer Boss: Common Characteristics

- Does not have (or does not disclose) personal Lived Experience
- Licensed medical or behavioral health professional (clinicians)
- Provides Medical Model treatments and interventions
 - Diagnosing, prescribing, therapy, clinical care, treatment planning
- Unfamiliar with the Recovery Model and/or direct Peer Services
 - Evidence base, practice guidelines, core competencies, scope of services, ethical standards, etc.
- Views Peers as clients/patients, clinician apprentices, or “extra help”

Quotes from Non-Peer Supervisors

- “Due to history of illness – requiring them to have a diagnosis and treatment in order to offer them this position – there needs to be understanding of the disorder and it is my opinion that a work WRAP should be in place that can be reviewed in supervision.”
- “Because a Peer staff utilizes their recovery as part of their work duties, then as a supervisor, I feel an obligation to check on how they are managing their wellness.”
- “They are in a coach role vs treatment role... the boundary for them and all staff can become fuzzy if not outlined and trained ethically so we [need to] educate [Peer] staff on professional boundaries.”

More Quotes

- “Peers need a lot of coaching on issues such as boundaries, confidentiality, conflict of interest, etc.”
- “I think the Peer support training should have a manual they need to study, and the supervisor have a copy to guide the Peer through it.”
- “I was asked to supervise our Peer supporters with very little guidance about what that meant and what they’re expected to do.”
- “[M]y busy main job duties have made it difficult to research their role in order to feel better equipped for this role.”
- “I wish, as a supervisor, I was supervised by a trained Peer.”

Themes from National Survey

Non-Peer Supervisors were more likely than Peer Supervisors to:

- Have a simplified view of the Peer role
- Rely on their clinical expertise to frame their view of Peers they supervise
- Assume Peers need more intensive and frequent supervision than other staff
- Lack clarity around the Peer role, duties, competencies, and expectations
- Lack the practical experience Peers are expected and required to have
- Feel a responsibility to monitor the mental health of Peer staff for triggers, signs of decompensation, stress, relapse, and self-care

The Non-Peer Boss: Quick Tips

Do:

- Educate them about your role, job duties, core competencies, practice guidelines, and ethical standards
- Be a good ambassador for the Peer profession
- Advocate for yourself, clients, and other Peers
- Model appropriate ethics, boundaries, and workplace behavior

Don't:

- Take their lack of understanding personally
- Adopt clinical language or perspectives to fit in
- Let micro-aggressions and negative assumptions go unaddressed

PART 6

CAPP RECOMMENDATIONS AND CALL TO ACTION

Governor Newsome Proposes: Modernizing Our Behavioral Health System & Building More Mental Health Housing

- Prioritizes housing
- Broadens target populations to include those with substance use disorders
- Focuses on Full-Service Partnerships
- Requires Counties to Bill Medi-Cal
- Improve accountability and increase transparency

Recommendation: Funding must require that Peer Support Specialists be imbedded in all MHSA funded programs

State Level Representation of Peers

- Establish a statewide Peer Certification (currently a county Certification)
- State level role for Peer Support Specialist representation: "Ambassador" or "Workforce Liaison"

Expand Peer Supervisor Training

- Current training is only one (1) hour
- Current training is self-paced with no live training or coaching
- Training should be provided by individuals with Peer Support Specialist experience/supervisory experience
- Mentorship and coaching for Peer Supervisors
- Mentorship and coaching to develop Peer Supervisors
 - Identify potential Peer Supervisors

CLOSING

Resources for Peers and Providers

- California Association of Peer Professionals | www.californiapeers.org
- Cal Voices | www.calvoices.org
- California Association of Mental Health Peer Run Organizations | <https://camhpro.org>
- Disability Rights California | www.disabilityrightsca.org
- Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) | www.dor.ca.gov/Home/GettingStarted
- SHARE! Self-Help and Recovery Exchange | <https://shareselfhelp.org>

Work or volunteer in a peer support role?

Join the California Association of Peer Professionals to stay in the loop and up-to-date when it comes to advancing the peer profession and keeping your voice at the table!



WWW.CALIFORNIAPEERS.ORG



Get Involved with CAPP

- Become a member:
<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6710429/Peer-Association-Registration-Form>
- Join our mailing list:
<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/172rycj>
- Post peer job openings:
<https://www.californiapeers.org/job-submission>

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Questions and Discussion

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