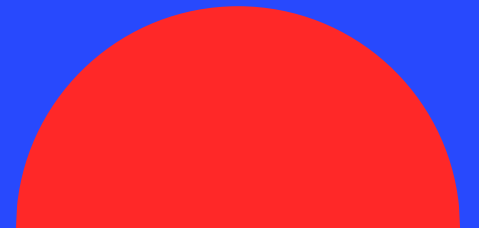
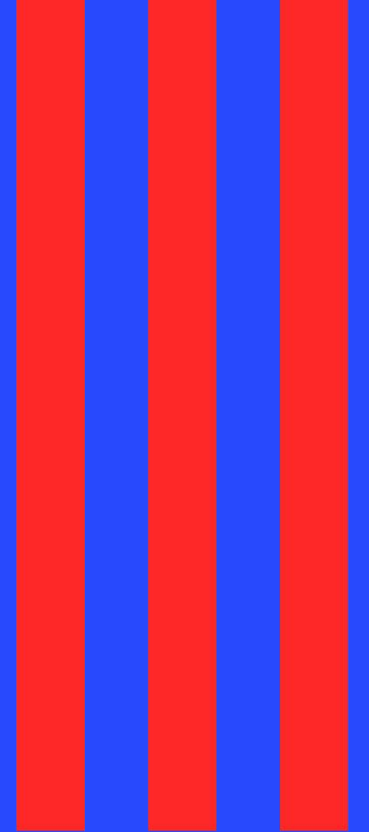


Navigating Retention Challenges of Peer Specialists

**SHARE! Peer Workforce Conference
April 17, 2024**

**Presenter
Dr. Kathy Cash
Certified Peer Specialist
U.S. Army Veteran**



Before we get started:

Please put in the chat if you are a

- A Supervisor who is also a Peer
- A Supervisor who is not a Peer
- A Peer
- Other (please identify)

Please hold any questions until the end of the presentation, or you may type them into the chat and they'll be answered during the Q & A.



Brief Bio

Dr. Kathy Cash is a US Army Veteran and a Certified Peer Support Specialist in the community. She currently serves as the Chaplain for the Department of California for The American Legion.

She holds a Doctor of Divinity degree and recently retired from the Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System where she was an integral part of the Peer Leadership Team.

Dr. Cash continues to share knowledge of the value of Peer Support with organizations and providers nationwide.

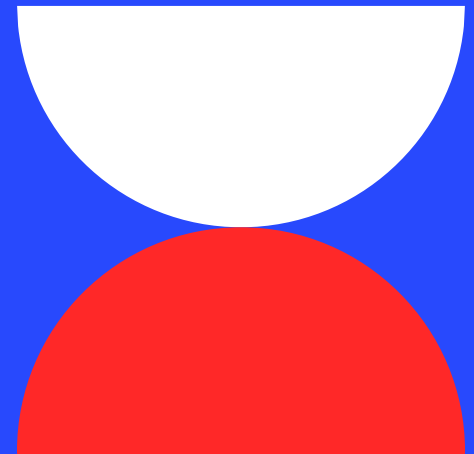
Dr. Kathy Cash

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Agenda

Objectives

Overview

The Challenges and Strategies

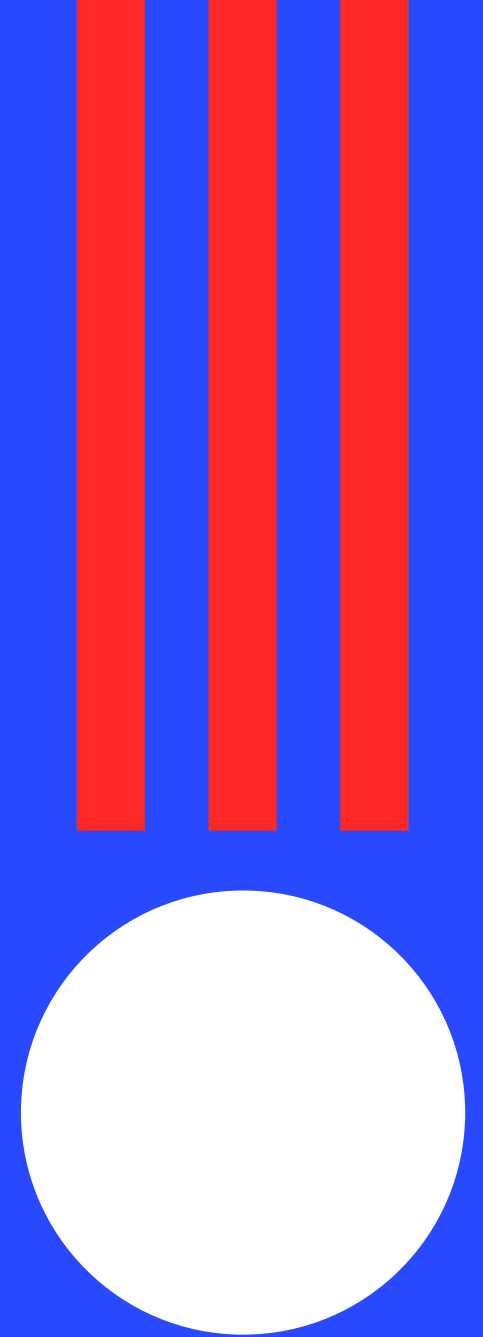
Review & takeaways

Q & A



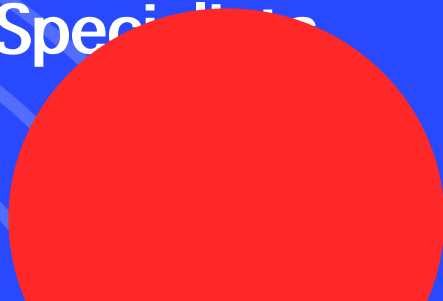
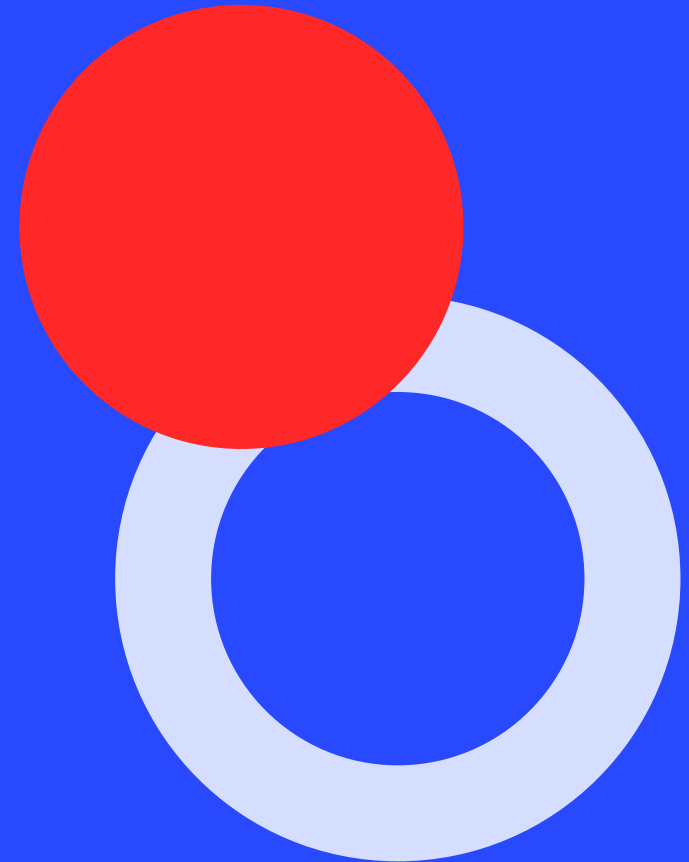
Objectives

1. Understand the unique challenges faced by Peer Specialists in terms of retention within mental health settings.
2. Identify strategies and best practices for improving retention rates among Peer Specialists.
3. Develop actionable plans for fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment for Peer Specialists.



Overview

Retaining Peer Specialists within mental health settings presents unique challenges due to the intersection of personal lived experiences, professional development needs, and organizational dynamics. This workshop aims to explore these challenges comprehensively and equip supervisors with effective strategies to enhance retention rates among Peer Specialists.



A stylized icon of a person's head and shoulders, composed of a white circle for the head and a red semi-circle for the shoulders, positioned in the top left corner of the slide.

The Challenges #1

Understanding the Lived Experience

- **Personal backgrounds and lived experiences**
- **Impact of stigma, discrimination, and burnout**

Understanding the Lived Experience

Personal Backgrounds and Lived Experiences:

- Peer Specialists bring diverse backgrounds and personal experiences to their roles.
- These experiences shape their motivations, challenges, and professional aspirations.

Impact of Stigma, Discrimination, and Burnout:

- Peer Specialists often face stigma and discrimination related to mental illness or substance use.
- This can lead to emotional exhaustion, compassion fatigue, and burnout.

Strategies: Understanding

1. Create a supportive work environment.
2. Encourage open dialogue and active listening with leadership and coworkers.
3. Develop Peer Support networks.
4. Understand and acknowledge their backgrounds.
5. Provide resources for self-care.



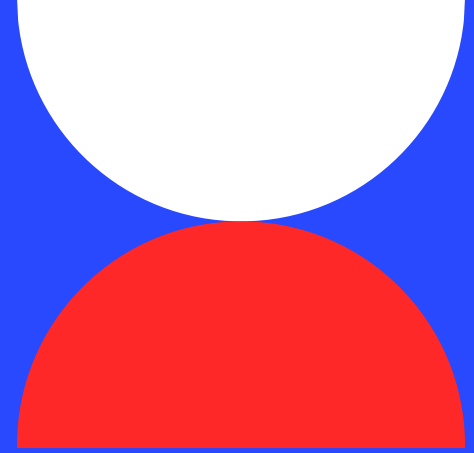


The Challenges #2

Professional Development and Career Advancement

- Explore the career trajectories and growth opportunities within mental health organizations
- Barriers to professional development

Professional Development and Career Advancement



Career Trajectories and Growth Opportunities:

- Peer Specialists seek meaningful career trajectories aligned with their personal and professional goals.
- Limited visibility of career pathways can hinder their professional development.

Barriers to Professional Development:

- Peer Specialists face barriers such as limited access to training resources and institutionalized stigma.
- Advocating for equitable access to training and development opportunities is crucial.

Strategies: Professional Development

1. Create transparent promotion criteria and skill-building workshops.
2. Collaborate with external partners and incorporate experiential learning methods.
3. Offer mentorship opportunities and peer-led workshops.
4. Recognized and celebrate milestones.
5. Invest in leadership development training for supervisors.



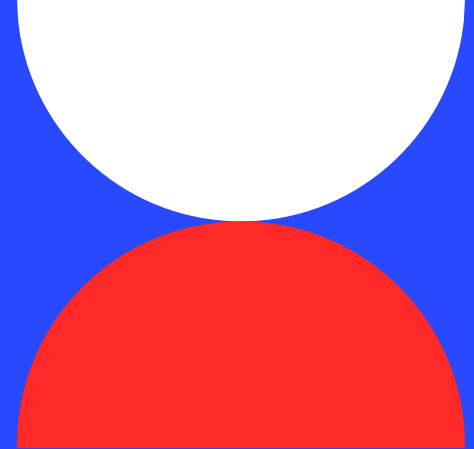


The Challenges #3

Addressing Organizational Factors

- Explore workload, supervision quality, and culture
- Role of leadership in valuing Peer Specialists

Addressing Organizational Factors



Analyzing Organizational Factors Contributing to Turnover:

- Factors such as workload, supervision quality, and organizational culture contribute to turnover.
- Collecting feedback through surveys and exit interviews helps identify root causes.

Role of Leadership in Promoting a Positive Organizational Culture:

- Effective leadership models transparency, empathy, and accountability.
- Leadership encourages a culture that values diversity, inclusion, and employee well-being.

Strategies: Factors of the Organization

1. Analyze turnover data and performance evaluations.
2. Provide opportunities for feedback, recognition, and professional development.
3. Establish clear communication channels and recognition programs.
4. Implement mentorship programs and wellness initiatives.
5. Create opportunities for employee input and participation in decision-making processes.



Review & takeaways

In this workshop, we explored the retention challenges faced by Peer Specialists, focusing on

- understanding their lived experiences
- addressing professional development needs
- addressing organizational factors.

By acknowledging and addressing these challenges, supervisors can play a pivotal role in improving retention rates and fostering a supportive work environment for Peer Specialists. Moving forward, it is crucial to continue implementing and refining the strategies discussed to ensure the long-term success and well-being of Peer Specialists within mental health settings.



Conclusion

Retaining Peer Specialists is essential for maintaining high-quality mental health services and promoting recovery-oriented care.

By understanding the unique challenges faced by Peer Specialists and implementing targeted strategies, supervisors can create a supportive and inclusive work environment that enhances retention rates and promotes the well-being of both Peer Specialists and the individuals they serve.

Q & A

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