Overview of Peer Supervision
Session Content

• Define the role of supervisor and explore what is universal to all supervisor roles and what is unique to role supervising peer workers
• Identify core competencies of supervisors and those supervising peers
• Provide opportunity to assess strengths and areas to strengthen
• Explore models and frameworks used to provide peer supervision
• Identify essential core elements within the few supervisor roles
Defining the Role
Definition According to Google

• A person in first-line management who monitors and regulates employees in their performance of assigned or delegated tasks

• A supervisor is defined as someone who guides the activities of people who perform the work

• Supervision includes planning, organizing, directing and controlling the work and activities of employees

• Supervisor is responsible for accomplishing the organization’s objectives through others
What are the Core Competencies for Supervisors?
General Supervisory Competencies

• Having the ability to apply effective communication strategies, self-monitoring, coaching skills, and training to support supervisees and the roles and functions of the group within the organization

• Interacting with clear verbal and nonverbal communication strategies

• Listening empathically to supervisees without judgment

• Maintaining accountability mechanisms to foster mutually responsible relationships

• Modeling professional behavior
General Supervisory Competencies

• Demonstrating an individualized approach to supervision that includes the creation of individualized supervision plans

• Demonstrating facilitation skills such as conflict resolution, problem solving, mediation, and interpersonal communication skills

• Developing and maintaining a personal connection with each supervisee through genuine warmth and unconditional positive regard in order to establish a professional relationship

• Developing and maintaining professional relationships with others in the organization
In addition to understanding the roles of the Certified Recovery Specialists, Certified Peer Specialists, and other recovery-related topics, organizations should be aware that supervisors need to receive training in employment law in order to understand legal hazards that could occur. Topics should include:

- Hiring Practices
- Discipline
- Documentation
- Performance Evaluations
- Discrimination
- Sexual Harassment
- Other Harassment
- FMLA/ADA
- Workplace Violence
- Wage and Hour Laws
- Privacy
- Termination
What is Peer Supervision?

- Supervision is a process, by which a trained professional provides regular support, instruction and feedback to peer supporters. This process is designed to ensure the emotional wellbeing of both the peer supporters and the individuals accessing the program.

- *Peer Support Supervision* occurs when a peer support supervisor and peer support specialist supervisee(s) formally meet to discuss and review the work and experience of the peer provider, with the aim of supporting the peer in their professional role.
Benefits of Supervision

• The benefits of supervision include:
  – enhanced accountability
  – increased feeling of support
  – development of professional skills and improved efficiency.

• Morale is increased by supervision ultimately resulting in lower levels of burnout.

• Supervision is also associated with decreased feelings of isolation and role ambiguity.
Who are Peer Supervisors?

• Licensed Social Workers/Licensed clinical staff
• Doctors and Nurses/Volunteer Coordinators
• Lead peer staff in centers with lived experience
• Criminal justice and court professionals
• Behavioral Health Program Directors and clinical staff
• There is not one answer!
• Peer supervision does not have a consistent professional accreditation or educational requirements
Are the supervisory needs in a peer-based recovery support service any different than in any other service?
Some of the differences lie in “How” things are operationalized and in the values and principles that drive the organization.
Similarities in Supervision

Clinical Services

• Focus on both the clinical staff and patient care services and insure quality of these services
• Ensure data collection is correct
• Help guide the clinician to write the treatment plan for the patient based on ASAM/or other criteria

Peer Recovery Services

• Focus on both the peer and the “recoveree” care services and ensure quality of these services
• Ensure data collection is correct
• Help guide the peer to coach others on their individual recovery plan defined by the recoveree
Differences in Supervision

Clinical Field

• Professional guidelines are standard in most states
• The level of educational requirements are primarily standard in most states
• The role does not require lived experience
• Random assignment of the client/clinician case load

Peer Support Field

• Professional guidelines differ in many states
• The level of educational requirements widely varies throughout states
• Although lived experience is not required it is sought after in peer organizations
• Matched person in recovery/CPS/CRS case load
Requirements for Supervision

What are the minimum requirements that should be addressed for supervision?

Supervision

• Medicaid requires that peer providers must be clinically supervised by a competent mental health professional defined by the State. Review your State Practice Act to identify the scope and duration of supervision that peer providers will need.

• Clinical supervision by a mental health professional helps to ensure that the peer provides the highest standard of service delivery in the best interest of the individual receiving the service.

• The clinical supervisor and administrative supervisor can be the same person or two different supervisors, with one focusing on clinical issues, skills training, etc. and the other on administrative issues such as timesheets, work hours, etc.

OMHSAS minimum requirements of CPS supervision for MA as an in-plan reimbursable service:

- A full time equivalent (“FTE”) supervisor may supervise no more than seven FTE CPS.
- Supervisors will conduct at least one face-to-face meeting with each CPS per week with additional support as needed or requested.
- Supervisors will maintain a log of supervisory meetings.
- CPS will receive at least six hours of direct supervision and mentoring from the supervisor in the field before working independently off-site.
Supervisor Role in Delivery of Peer Support Services

Area of Competencies for Peer Support Supervisor:

• Build and maintain a trusting professional relationship between the supervisor and the Peer Support Specialist that helps the Peer Support Specialist meet job performance goals.

• Ensure that supervisors do not take on the role of therapist to Peer Support Specialists and that they understand the difference between supervision and therapist/counselor roles in order to maintain appropriate focus on Peer Support Specialist job performance.
Supervisor Role in Delivery of Peer Support Services

• Maintain appropriate confidentiality of information disclosed during supervision that meets legal and professional requirements in order to assure appropriate and successful supervisor-to-supervisee relationships.

• Evaluate and provide feedback of Peer Support Specialists’ job performance in various settings (e.g. with the people they serve, team members, and other agencies) using a variety of techniques (e.g. observations, reviews of progress notes, and discussions with people served) in order to ensure that Peer Support Specialists are helping people served meet their goals, interacting in a peer-to-peer fashion, and working within the Peer Support Specialist scope of practice.
Expectations of the Peer Supervisor

Ultimately, the supervisor represents the service agency or institution in a quality control and quality improvement capacity, but the supervisor also has other responsibilities. At times, these responsibilities may conflict with one another, which can create ethical dilemmas and stress.

• The responsibility to the service agency is to achieve the goal of delivering the highest possible care at the lowest possible cost in the shortest possible time.

• The responsibility to people who use the agency’s services is to help them achieve their own goals in the most efficient and supportive way.

• The responsibility to the peer specialist is to allow ample opportunity to practice and improve.
What needs to be considered in developing the Peer Supervisor’s role?
Supervision Challenges

- Peer roles are still evolving
- New roles are required
  - Advocate, protector; change agent
- Lack of training in supervision
- Resisting temptation and habit of a “clinical” perspective on employment issues
Supervisor Modeling
Operating Values Guiding Supervision of Peer-Based Recovery Support Services

- **Hope**: Sustained recovery and its rewards are possible for individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities.

- **Respect**: Treat all peers with courtesy and appreciation of their unique strengths and contributions; negotiate rather than dictate; gain trust by giving trust.

- **Transparency**: Make the criteria upon which decisions are made and the decision-making process visible to all people affected by the decision, e.g., from backroom decision-making to picture window decision-making.

- **Inclusion**: Involve the people who will be affected by a decision in the decision-making process; cultivate mutual learning, interdependence, and reciprocity of support.

- **Fidelity**: Make only promises you can keep; keep the promises you make.

- **Honesty and Candor**: Tell the truth; when wrong, promptly admit it and make amends, e.g., “I made a mistake; it is my responsibility to correct it; I will correct it.”

- **Forgiveness**: Expiate and let go of the past; expect some regression to old styles of interacting, promptly acknowledge such regression and correct it.

- **Consistency and Endurance**: Stay on message and sustain the effort; transformation, like recovery, is not an event but a prolonged process.
Role Clarity

• Develop a *clear job description*
  – Provide detailed information about job expectations and requirements

• Revisit the job description periodically
  – Ensure that it is up to date
  – Check that both parties are on the same page
A supervisor is also responsible for responding to complaints about peer’s behavior. This is one reason it is very important to have appropriate procedures in place to address concerns and assure prompt resolution of any issues that need to be addressed.
Key Components of Peer Supervisor

• Can teach boundaries, self care and model it for the peers they supervise
• Have a broad range of experience in mental health and addiction recovery
• Must be able to recognize symptomology of active addiction and mental health conditions that need attention by other professionals for a higher level of care
• Good documentation and time management skills
• Must be able to empower peers to take the next step in their own professional and personal development
• Must have good communication and business management skills
• Must have a broad understanding of health care and health care insurance
Things to Consider in Peer Work

Self Care

• Supervisors spend a great amount of time supporting staff and volunteers in self care

• The burnout rate for those that do peer services more than 20 hours a week is highest in situations where self care opportunities do not exist where they work

Peer Advancement

• Supervisors must consider motivating peers to continue their education & training

• This is a high turnover field not just because people have health issues and become too sick to work, but because they thrive and move on to better positions and more educational opportunities
The Peer Specialist Supervisor

Keeps the focus of supervision on work performance

NOT

on the Peer Specialist’s mental health/addiction issues
Three major areas of performance – each having their own tasks:

• Supervisor role in the delivery of Peer Support Services
• Understanding the Peer Support Specialist Role
• Educational support for the Peer Support Specialist
A Lot to Think About...
Solutions

There are strategies and tools for proactively managing and mitigating some of the challenges often experienced, and for responding to them as they arise.
Strategies to Manage Role?
Effective Implementation of policies and procedures
  • Quality of Work
  • Maximize resource use
  • Conformance, fidelity
  • Appropriate, complete record-keeping

Effective Training and Development
  • Regular space to reflect on content and process of role
  • Knowledge, skills, competencies, abilities, attitudes
  • Information and perspective on one’s work

Supportive

Supervision

Administrative

Educational

Morale and satisfaction
  • Feedback on one’s work
  • Validate and support
  • Advocate for peer work
Supervisory Alliance Model

• Focuses on functions and tasks of peer support supervision, including:

  – Managerial/Administrative: documentation, policies, procedures

  – Formative/Educative: review/reinforcement of peer support skills and recovery tools. Enhancing identified strengths and recognizing growing edges

  – Supportive: providing consultation regarding particular individual mentoring/recovery coaching and/or group work
Developmental Model

• Rationale for including more seasoned peer provider in supervision process in order to draw upon their wisdom and expertise

• Including seasoned peer in supervision can help clarify peer provider’s professional development process (i.e., peer apprentice, advanced beginner, competent worker, experienced worker, and expert)
Two Roles

• Administrative supervision
  – Organizational efficiency

• Consultative supervision
  – Professional development of supervisee

• Two roles: complementary & contradictory

Supervisees often benefit from having separate supervisors for these roles
Coordinating Multiple Supervisions

• Common for Veterans Administration peer specialist/technicians to have multiple supervisors including administrative and clinical/program specific

• Lack of coordination between supervisors can lead to confusion, conflict, and misunderstanding

• Strategies for improving coordination:
  – Site peer champion (e.g., Local Recovery Coordinator) meets with supervisors in advance to discuss peer roles and supervision expectations
  – Quarterly or bi-annual supervisor meetings with all supervisors and individual peer staff
Lunch