

Empowering Change: The Impact of Peer Recovery Support

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, peer support specialists are “people who have been **successful in the recovery process who help others** experiencing similar situations.”

Support Types Provided

Emotional

Motivational

Informational

Instrumental

Affiliative

The Research

Broadly: An assessment of 10 scientific studies published between 1992 and 2012 showed these promising results for people who work with peer recovery specialists:

- ✓ lower rates of cocaine and opiate use
- ✓ high drug-free rates after 6 months
- ✓ lower rehospitalization rates
- ✓ satisfaction with their peer recovery coaches

Specifically: One study examined **behavioral activation** and the role peer recovery specialists can have in this process. They answer two questions:

Question 1: Are peer recovery coach-delivered BAs **appropriate** for individuals from low-income communities?

Answer: Yes! Study participants preferred work with peer recovery coaches.



Question 2: What are the **barriers** to implementing this kind of program?

Answer: Several barriers like financial issues, the presence of drugs in the community, and the severity of drug use can hamper implementation.

Sources: Reif, S., Braude, L., Lyman, R., Dougherty, R., Daniels, A., Ghose, S., Salim, O., & Delphin-Rittmon, M. (2014). Peer recovery support for individuals with substance use disorders: Assessing the evidence. *Psychiatric Services*, 65(7), 853–861.
Satinsky, E., Doran, K., Felton, J., Kleinman, M., Dean, D., & Magidson, J. (2020). Adapting a peer recovery coach-delivered behavioral activation intervention for problematic substance use in a medically underserved community in Baltimore City. *PLoS ONE*, 15(1). Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (n.d.). Peer support and social inclusion. <https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers>