

Defining the Peer Supporter Role for Your Team

The Peer Supporter role can vary significantly based on the need of the organization, which can easily cause confusion. The information below is meant to guide you in defining the peer role for your specific team.

Four Keys to a Successful Role Definition

1

Shared Expectations

You, your team, and the organization as a whole are on the same page about the Peer Supporter role, including the how and why of activities and tasks.

2

Strategic Alignment

Everyone understands how the Peer Supporter role lines up with what drives the program or organization you're a part of. These "strategic drivers" can include explicit documents like mission statements or diversity, equity, and inclusion agendas, or less obvious things like organizational culture or team members' attitudes towards substance use recovery.

3

Organizational Support

The organization provides practical support to the Peer Supporter, such as training and resources, a collaborative relationship with a supervisor, benefits, work structures that meet personal and professional needs.

4

Distinctiveness

The Peer Supporter performs tasks and activities that are distinct from other team members in a way that aligns with the purpose of the role, such as bringing in role-modeling to a support group.

Guiding Questions for Role Definition

1. When has discussing expectations with coworkers improved your ability to work together? How can you replicate that in your current role?
2. When has it felt like your role is well aligned with your organization's goals or mission?
3. How do you see your role? What are the key words you would use to describe what you do? What is the essence of what makes your role unique and helpful for the people that you work with and the people you support?
4. What tasks do you do that are most aligned with the way that you see your role? What about these tasks aligns with your view of your role? How can you bring that to the tasks that do not feel as aligned with your role?

Dimensions of the Peer Support Role

Reflecting on where peer support falls on these continuums can help identify and communicate the unique characteristics of the role for your team or organization.

