

# **Peer Specialists**

## ***Igniting Recovery***

Improving Recovery Outcomes

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# What is a Peer Specialist?



**A Peer Specialist** is a person who has not only lived the experience of mental illness but also has had formal training in the peer specialist model of mental health supports. They use their unique set of recovery experiences in combination with solid skills training to support peers who have mental illness.

**Peer Specialists** actively incorporate peer support into their work while working within an agencies team support structure as a defined part of the recovery team.

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# Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist Employment Initiative...



## Where Peer Specialists are Employed...

- Emergency Rooms
- Crisis Services
- In and Outpatient Care
- Veteran's Hospitals
- Independent Living Centers
- Prisons and Forensic Areas
- Community Resource Centers
- Drop In Centers and Clubhouses
- CSP-Community Support Program
- CCS-Comprehensive Community Services
- ADRC's-Aging and Disability Resource Center
- Family Care

*January 2010 marked Wisconsin's first group of **Certified Peer Specialists** that already are or will be employed in the field of Mental Health Recovery.*

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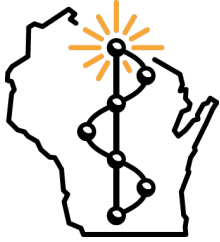
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# Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialists...

Perform an important role as part of a Mental Health Recovery Team.

These Include:

- One to one support
  - group facilitation
  - information and education
  - job coaching
  - recovery mentoring
  - social integration
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**In a recovery-oriented system**, mental health consumers rebuild meaningful lives while decreasing their dependence on the system. They participate in **services that enable them to recover** rather than become long-term users of the mental health system. **From a therapeutic as well as an economic standpoint, this approach has great appeal.”**

- Wisconsin’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Mental Health



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## Certification Exam Update...

- There were four certification exams in 2010. January, March June and September. The passing score is 85%. Exams were proctored online at the eight Wisconsin Independent Living Centers
  - Over 100 people applied to take the exam
  - 88% of the people certified are already working.
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## Wisconsin Counties and 1915i...

36 counties have signed up  
to participate in 1915i

Index Title: 1915(i) State Plan Amendment  
Community Recovery Services for individuals  
with severe and persistent mental illness.

- A percentage of the Certified Peer Specialist wages are reimbursable through this program.
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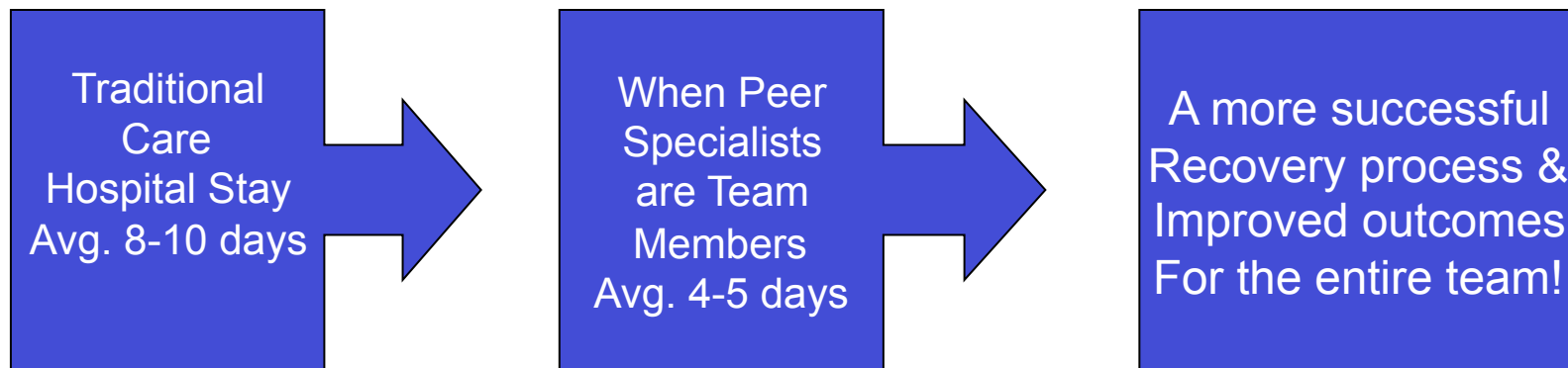
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# Peer Specialists

## Improve Outcomes...



**The positive consumer outcomes of Peer Specialists are well documented throughout the United States.**





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# Positive Financial Outcomes...

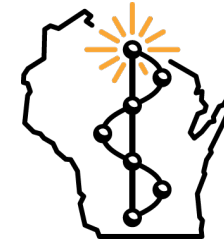


*Current nationwide research is showing that having a Certified Peer Specialist as part of a consumer's mental health recovery team reduces hospital stays and emergency room visits.*

- Dumont and Jones studied 25 New York Consumers with DSM-III R (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition*) diagnosis who were randomly assigned access to inpatient Peer Support or traditional care. They found that, over just one year, the test groups average cost for their expanded set of **services was \$4,831 less per person** than the cost of the control groups with standard care.
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# Improved Outcomes...



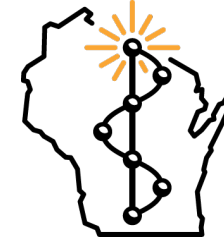
A longitudinal study of 104 consumers found that clients who received services from teams with Peer Specialists, “posted the **largest gains** on 20 of 31 measures.” These effects were greatest in the areas of self image, outlook and social support.

*-Felton et al. Consumers as Peer Specialists on Intensive Case Management Teams: Impact on Clinical Outcomes. Psychiatric Services 46:1037-1044*

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# Improved Outcomes...

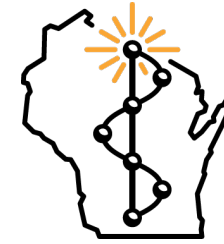


Resnick and Rosenheck's study of 296 Veteran consumers found that those who worked with Peer Specialists showed **superior outcomes** on the Global Assessment of Functioning, Mental Health Confidence Scale and Activities of Daily Living Scale.

- Resnick & Rosenheck. *Integrating Peer-Provided Services: A Quasi-experimental Study of Recovery Orientation, Confidence and Empowerment. Psychiatric Services* 59: 1307-1314, 2008.
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# Employer Testimonials ...



As Clinical Director of the [Milwaukee County Intensive Day Treatment Program](#) I have witnessed the tremendous impact of Peer Support Specialists (PSS) in co-leading treatment groups in our Dialectical Behavior Therapy Program and on our Stabilization and Recovery Team. PSS are uniquely suited to provide the *core* DBT healing component of *validation*. By sharing their experiences of loss and suffering and emotional dysregulation they provide a depth of understanding and meaning that can only come from “one who has been there”. PSS thereby greatly assist peers in engaging in this intense treatment and provide living demonstrations of why it is worth the effort to keep practicing DBT.

On the S & R Team, PSS connect with and relate to the experiences of persons with psychosis, many of whom are reeling from the terror and confusion of a “first break”. They validate their experiences, help them accept the reality of their symptoms, yet most importantly, provide hope through real life examples that Recovery is Possible.

**Dr. John E. Prestby, PhD**

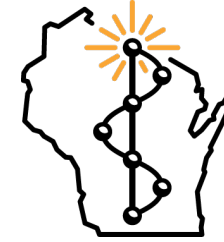
Clinical Program Director Day Treatment Program

Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division Milwaukee, WI

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# Consumer Testimonials...



My Peer Specialist has a large knowledge base of regulations and resources and she never makes things intimidating or condescending.

Peer Specialists are very valuable.  
...Mark Y.



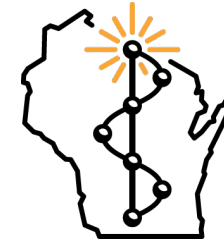
Having a Peer Specialist is very important to my recovery. We work as a team to set goals and be successful. I am able to live more independently and go to school and work.

...Anne B.

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# The New Website...



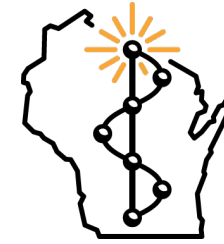
The Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist  
Employment Initiative Website

[www.wicps.org](http://www.wicps.org)

- Career pages
  - Employment
  - Certification Exam information
  - Links & resources
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# Contact Information...



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Thank you!

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