

# Peer Support Specialists

Let's Unite with One Classification

25,317

Certified Peer Specialists<sup>1</sup>

1/4

of all U.S. mental health facilities<sup>2</sup>



There were 25,317 Certified Mental Health Peer Specialists nationally as of 2016. By 2017, approximately one-quarter of all U.S. mental health facilities were offering peer services. And far more people are providing peer support services under various titles in multiple systems of care and institutions, and through many payors, than has yet been fully documented. The true number of peer support workers cannot be accurately counted by the U.S. Department of Labor without a single standard occupational classification.

The National Association of Peer Supporters (N.A.P.S.) supports inclusion of "Peer Support Specialist" as a Department of Labor Standard Occupational Classification.

## Proposed Definition of a Peer Support Specialist

A Peer Specialist is Someone Who:

### Has Personal Experience:

Discloses personal experiences of overcoming challenges in ways that inspire hope, empowerment, and positive action.

### Engages Individuals:

Engages individuals in personalized, peer-to-peer relationships that support development and use of skills to manage crises and achieve recovery, wellness, and life goals.

### Provides Certain Services:

Provides recovery-oriented, non-clinical support services to individuals and/or groups, and may engage in facilitating individual rights and systems advocacy.

### Connects People:

Uses personal knowledge to navigate systems and link individuals to resources and services including education, employment, and social activities that can help them to achieve their goals.

### Educates Clients and Families:

May educate individuals and/or groups, as well as family members, about health, wellness, and recovery.

### Educates Coworkers:

May use lived experience to educate colleagues on using person-centered, recovery-oriented practices when interacting with individuals and/or groups to enhance the provision of services and supports.

## One role, many titles

While Peer Support Specialists work under many different job titles, their core role is the same: to draw from their own lived experience and skills to support people with mental health and substance use conditions.



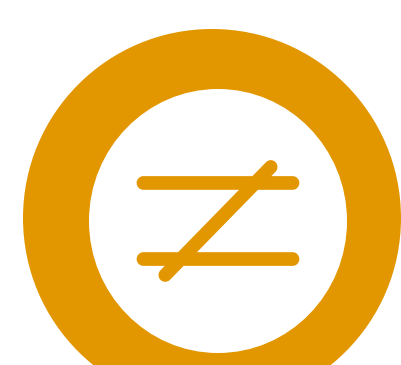
## Benefits of including Peer Support Specialist as a Department of Labor Standard Occupational Classification



Establishes national data on the number of employed peer support workers and their compensation.



Increases professional identity and respect.



Differentiates the scope of work performed by peer support workers from other human service roles.

## References

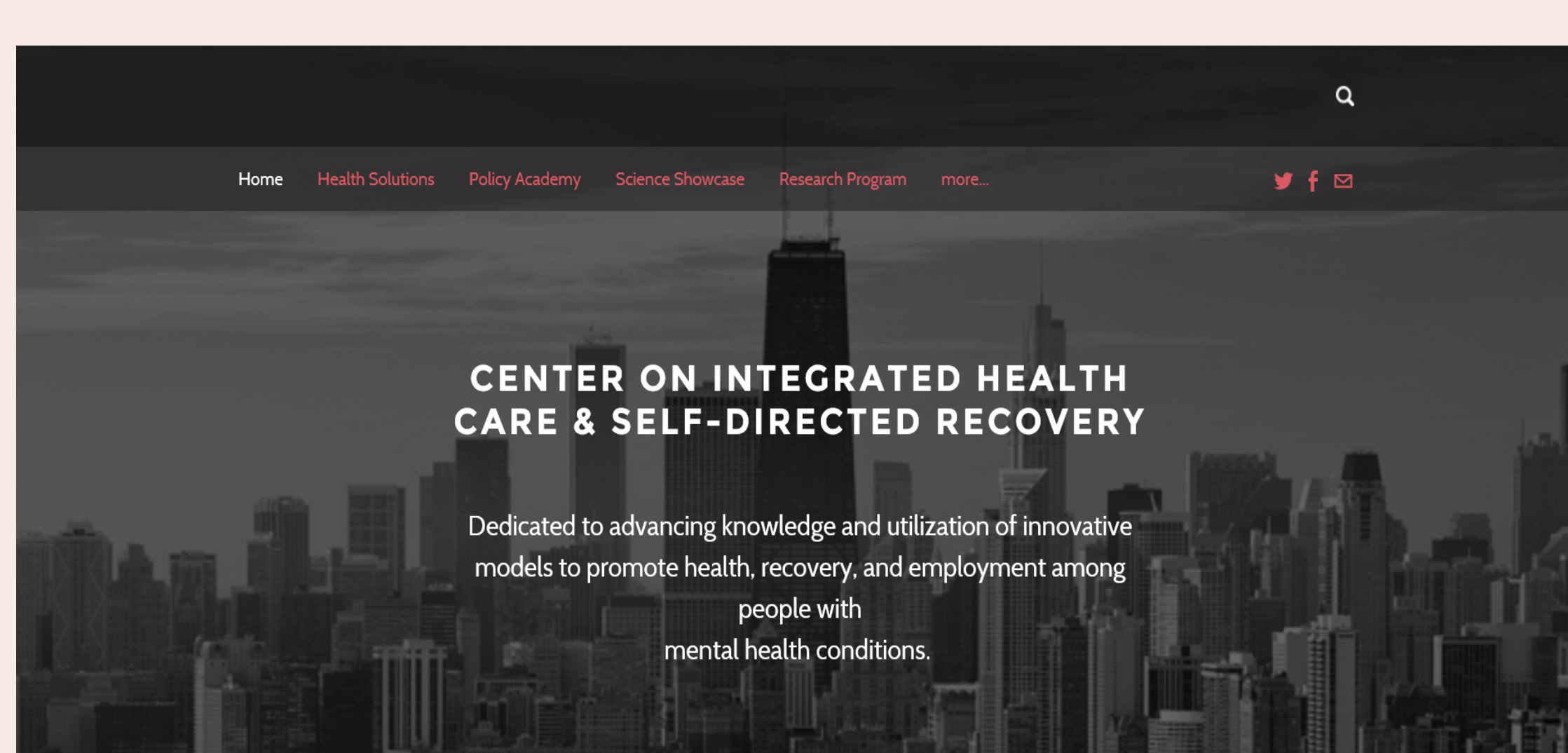
1. Wolf, J. (2018). National trends in peer specialist certification. *Psychiatric Services* 69 (10), 1049. This number does not include thousands of non-certified peer support workers as well as those employed in forensic, youth, parent partners, substance use and other behavioral, primary and integrated health settings as well as serving specific population groups.

2. University of Michigan Behavioral Health Workforce Research Center. (2019). National analysis of peer support providers: practice settings, requirements, roles, and reimbursement. Ann Arbor: Michigan, UMSPH.

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