



# PREGNANCY & SUBSTANCE USE: A PEER'S ROLE

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## Module 1.1: Is This Your Calling?

# Module Summary

## Module Purpose

This module helps peer support specialists evaluate whether working with pregnant and postpartum participants is the right fit for them, while also understanding the unique opportunities and challenges of this specialized role.

## Key Points

### Peer Support

- Peer support may be especially impactful during pregnancy and postpartum phases, when participants may have increased motivation to change AND increased risks for negative health outcomes
- Before working with pregnant and postpartum participants, peers should thoughtfully and knowledgeably answer the question, “Is this my calling?”

### Critical Skills for Peers

- Maintain non-judgmental support despite personal triggers, biases, or difficult emotions
- Recognize signs of burnout and compassion fatigue in yourself
- Establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries while building trust
- Self-assess comfort level with topics like pregnancy loss, child welfare, and custody decisions

### Essential Supports and Resources

- Access to high-quality, ongoing training specific to pregnancy and substance use
- Effective supervision from someone with deep understanding of peer practice and recovery principles
- Peer community networks for mutual support and consultation
- Regular self-care practices (“oxygen mask rule”: you must care for yourself to help others)



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### Practice Applications

- Develop a personal “elevator speech” to educate clinicians and partners about your peer role and scope
- Share brief educational materials with community partners to advocate for the value of peer support
- Promote training within your organization about what peers do and don't do
- Use self-assessment tools regularly to check your readiness and well-being

### Recommended Resources

| Training Resources for Peers   |
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| NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals<br><a href="#">Peer Recovery Support Resources</a>                     |
| Postpartum Support International (PSI)<br><a href="#">Peer and Social Support Webinar Series</a>                           |
| Faces and Voices of Recovery (F&V)<br><a href="#">Upcoming Events</a>  |
| Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)<br><a href="#">Video Trainings for Recovery Support</a> |
| Opioid Response Network (ORN)<br><a href="#">Upcoming Events</a>   |
| Indian Country Care and Access for Pregnant People - ECHO<br><a href="#">Training Center</a>                               |

| Community Resources for Peers   |
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| NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals<br><a href="#">Peer Support Specialists Online Community</a><br><a href="#">NAADAC Networking Opportunities</a> |
| Center for Addiction Recovery Support (CARS)<br><a href="#">Upcoming Events</a>   |
| Start Your Own Peer Support Group<br><a href="#">Creating and Facilitating Peer Support Groups</a>  |



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### Additional Self-Care Resources for Peer Support

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)  
[Incorporating Peer Support into Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services](#)  
EXHIBIT 3.5. Self-Care Tips for Peer Workers (Page 91)

Faces & Voices of Recovery (F&V)  
[Self-Care Menu for Peer Recovery Support Specialists](#)

Veterans Health Administration (VHA)  
[Walking the Tightrope Between Helping Others & Self-Care](#)

### Resources to Share with Community Partners

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)  
[Value of Peers Infographics: Peer Recovery](#)  
[Value of Peers Infographics: General Peer Support](#)  
[What Are Peer Recovery Support Services?](#)  
[TIP 64: Incorporating Peer Support into Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services](#)

Faces & Voices of Recovery (F&V)  
[The Cost-Effectiveness of Long-Term Post-Treatment Peer Recovery Support Services in the United States](#)

### Planning for Training Staff on Peer Roles and Responsibilities

Centre for Excellence in Peer Support & Centre for Innovation in Peer Support  
[Supervising Peer Workers: A Toolkit for Implementing and Supporting Successful Peer Staff Roles in Mainstream Mental Health and Substance Use/Addiction Organizations](#)



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