

How Problem Gambling Peers Work Across Diverse Roles & State Systems

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Moderator

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Panelists

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Welcome!

Peer support is one of the fastest-growing components of behavioral health

Yet problem gambling peer services remain relatively new, and every state is building its system differently. There is no single blueprint, no universal model, and no shortage of lessons to share.

Today's conversation explores how peers contribute across diverse settings, organizations, and funding structures. This is not a competition between approaches, it is an invitation to learn from one another and strengthen the field together.

Session Purpose

Rather than asking "**Which state has the best model?**", we invite a different, more generative question.

Systems Shape Roles

How do different funding structures, organizations, and policy environments shape what peers can do?

Experience Complements Care

How does lived experience add something that clinical training alone cannot provide?

Innovation Travels

What practices developed in one state can be thoughtfully adapted and applied elsewhere?

Peers Strengthen the Continuum

How can peer services deepen and extend recovery support systems nationwide?

Learning Objectives

By the end of today's session, participants will be able to:

Understand

Describe the unique contributions of peer support specialists in problem gambling recovery, and why their role is distinct from clinical care.

Compare

Recognize how peer roles differ across state systems, funding models, and organizational contexts, drawing on real examples from Virginia, Nebraska, Oregon, and Tennessee.

Apply

Identify practical strategies that can strengthen peer integration within your own organization, regardless of where your state is in the process.

Who's in the Room?

Let's take a moment to learn about each other. Raise your hand if you are...



Peer Recovery Specialist



Clinician



Prevention Professional



Program Administrator



Researcher



Student



Person in Recovery



Other



Does your state currently have gambling-specific peer support services?

Yes Active peer services in place	No Not yet established
Developing Currently building a program	Unsure Not certain of current status



Discussion: Lived Experience as Professional Expertise

Recovery Is More Than Treatment

Recovery is not a clinical event, it is a whole-life journey. Problem gambling touches every dimension of a person's life, and sustainable recovery requires support across all of them. Peer support often serves as the connective tissue that links individuals to the full range of resources they need.



Peers bridge these areas by connecting individuals with community resources, helping navigate complex systems, and sustaining recovery long after formal treatment ends.

Stages of Change

People move through recovery at their own pace and in their own way. One of peer support's greatest strengths is the ability to engage meaningfully regardless of where someone stands, without judgment, without pressure.



Precontemplation

Not yet aware of or acknowledging the problem



Contemplation

Beginning to recognize and consider change



Preparation

Making plans and building readiness to act



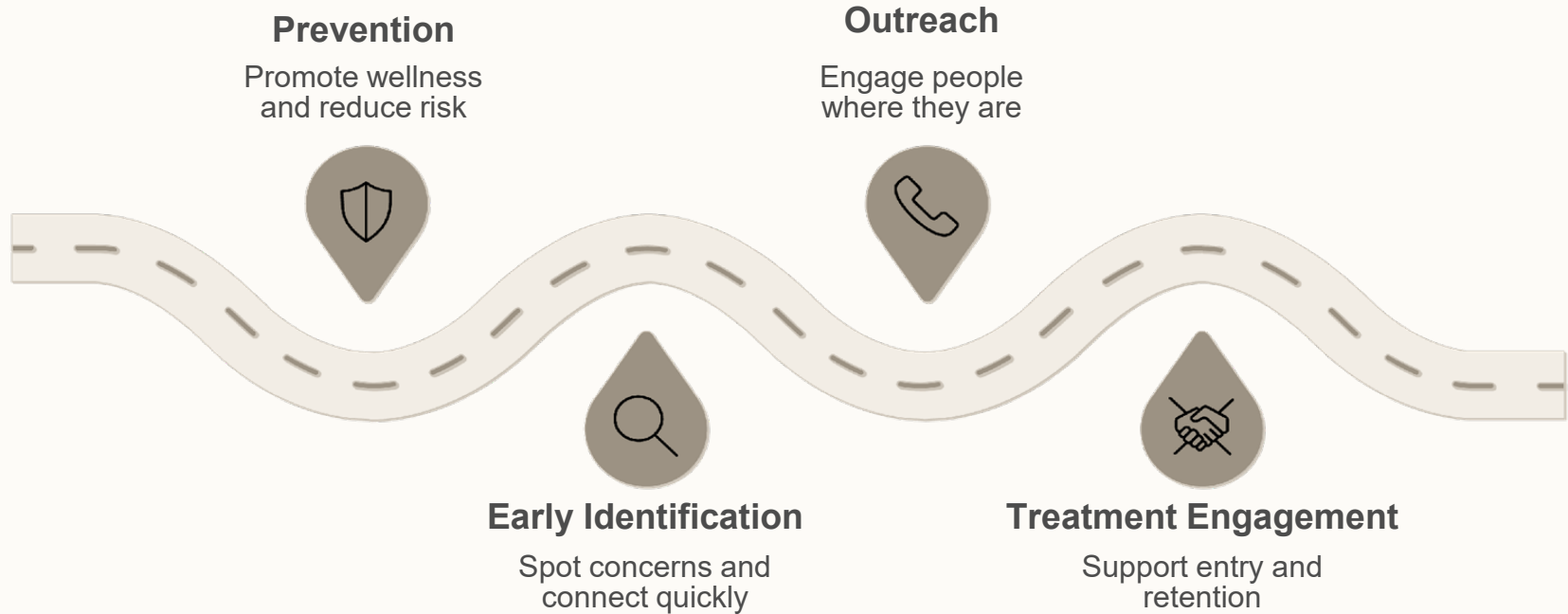
Action & Maintenance

Actively changing and sustaining new patterns

- Peer support meets people where they are, not where we think they should be. This is a core strength of the peer relationship.

Where Do Peers Make the Greatest Impact?

Peer support is not limited to one point on the care continuum, it adds value at every stage, from early outreach to long-term recovery maintenance. The role may shift, but the need for connection remains constant.



Consider how peer roles evolve at each stage, from raising awareness and reducing stigma in prevention, to providing ongoing encouragement and accountability in long-term recovery. How does peer support differ across each of these stages in your experience?

Meet the States

Understanding the Landscape

Before we compare successes and challenges, let's hear how each state has built its program.

We'll explore:

- Program structure
- Funding and sustainability
- Peer workforce development
- Core peer recovery services
- Lessons learned along the way

Measuring Success

How we measure success reflects what we believe recovery is. Moving beyond abstinence, only metrics opens the door to a more complete and honest picture of what peer support achieves.



Treatment Engagement

Did more people show up, stay in, and complete treatment?



Recovery Capital

Did individuals build more internal and external resources to sustain recovery?



Quality of Life & Hope

Did people report greater wellbeing, optimism, and sense of possibility?



Community Connection

Did people feel less isolated and more connected to supportive communities?

Other meaningful indicators include housing stability, employment, and reduced financial harm, outcomes that matter to individuals and families even when abstinence is not yet the immediate goal.

Clinical Care + Peer Support

These two roles are most powerful when they work in concert, not in competition. A well-integrated model assigns responsibilities based on what each role does best, creating a seamless experience for the person in recovery.

Clinical Services

- Assessment & formal diagnosis
- Evidence-based treatment planning
- Therapeutic interventions
- Clinical documentation & compliance

Peer Services

- Engagement & rapport-building
- System navigation & resource connection
- Encouragement through difficult moments
- Advocacy & lived experience perspective
- Long-term recovery relationship

Together, these complementary roles improve treatment retention, reduce dropout, and support more durable recovery outcomes, especially for populations who have struggled to engage with traditional services alone.

Workforce Development

Building a sustainable peer workforce is one of the most pressing challenges facing states developing gambling-specific peer services. The questions are universal, even when the answers differ.



Recruit

How do we find and attract people with lived experience who are ready for peer roles, especially in gambling, where stigma runs deep?



Prevent Burnout

How do we support peer wellbeing, prevent secondary trauma, and sustain engagement in emotionally demanding work?



Train

What training is required? What gambling-specific competencies are essential beyond general peer certification?



Build Diversity

How do we ensure our peer workforce reflects the communities we serve, across race, gender, age, and recovery experience?

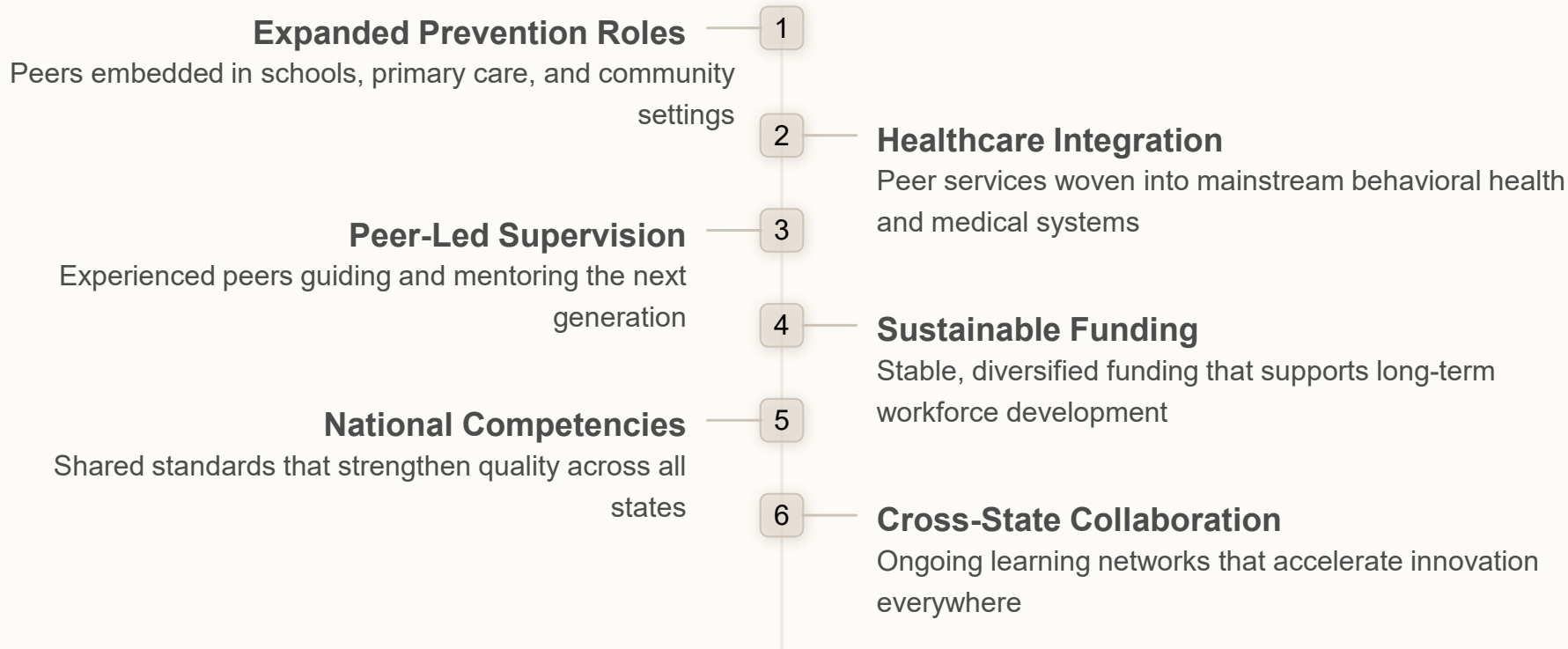


Supervise

How do we provide meaningful clinical and peer supervision that supports growth without undermining peer identity?

Looking Ahead

The problem gambling peer workforce is still emerging, which means those of us in this room have a real opportunity to shape what it becomes. The future is not fixed; it is being built right now, through conversations like this one.



Thank you

Questions?



Audience Activity

Turn to someone near you, a colleague, a neighbor in your row, or someone you haven't met yet. Take two minutes to discuss:

"What is one idea from today's discussion that could strengthen peer support in your organization?"

It might be a program model, a practice, a question to bring back to your team, or simply a new way of thinking about the role of lived experience in your work. There are no wrong answers, only ideas worth sharing.

