



The Power of Peers

Incorporating Peer Support into Therapeutic Courts

Introductions

- **Marjorie Drieu**, Certified Peer Counselor & Recovery Coach, is a Program Manager at Peer Kent where she oversees Peer Recovery Support Specialists (PRSS) placed in King County Drug Diversion Court (KCDDC) and Renton, Federal Way, and Des Moines Municipal Courts. Marjorie has been in recovery since May 7, 2019. In recovery, Marjorie has found her passion in life as a mother, daughter, sister, and peer. She is a KCDDC graduate and dedicates her efforts and lived experiences to supporting others navigate their justice involvement and recovery.
- **Lizzy DesChane**, serves as the Treatment Coordinator for King County Adult Drug Diversion Court (KCDDC). She holds dual degrees—a BS in Public Health and a BA in Medical Anthropology and Global Health from the University of Washington. With over ten years of dedicated experience, Lizzy has focused on assisting individuals with substance use disorder and criminal legal involvement. Her professional background includes roles as a Drug Court Case Manager and as a Resource Specialist at Therapeutic Health Services.



Agenda

- Introductions
- Peer Support and Peer Recovery Support Specialists (PRSS)
- All Rise Practice Guidelines and PRSS Core Values
- Peer Support in King County Drug Court
- Peer Support in Municipal Courts
- PRSS Training
- Ethics and Boundaries
- Supervision
- Benefits and considerations
- Peer Support after Therapeutic Court graduation
- Questions and resources



Peer Support and Peer Recovery Support Specialists



Peer Support

All Rise defines Peer Support as, “The process of giving and receiving help among people in similar situations based on key principles that include respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement on what is helpful. Peer support is an evidence-based model of care that consists of a qualified peer support practitioner who assists individuals with their recovery from substance use disorder and/or mental health conditions”.

https://allrise.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Incorporating-Peer-Recovery-Support-into-Treatment-Courts_Practice-Guidelines.pdf

Peer Recovery Support Specialist (PRSS)

- All Rise defines PRSS as, “An individual currently in recovery who has lived experience with addiction and/or co-occurring mental health disorders and has been trained to help their peers with a similar experience to gain hope, explore recovery, and achieve life goals.”
- Other terms for PRSS include peer support worker, peer navigator, peer recovery coach, peer mentor and peer support specialist.

https://allrise.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Incorporating-Peer-Recovery-Support-into-Treatment-Courts_Practice-Guidelines.pdf





All Rise Practice Guidelines and PRSS Core Values

All Rise Practice Guidelines

- In November 2023, All Rise published “Incorporating Peer Recovery Support into Treatment Courts: Practice Guidelines for Treatment Court Professionals”
- 5 Guidelines
 1. Treatment court staff receive training on the core competencies of peer recovery support.
 2. The treatment court has written roles and responsibilities that align with peer recovery support services’ nationally recognized competencies and ethics.
 3. The treatment court program has established processes for recruiting, hiring, and orienting peer recovery support specialists to the treatment court.
 4. The treatment court ensures that peer recovery support specialists receive regular and ongoing external supervision from qualified staff.
 5. Peer recovery support specialists receive annual ethics training, and policies and procedures are in place to address ethics issues.

https://allrise.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Incorporating-Peer-Recovery-Support-into-Treatment-Courts_Practice-Guidelines.pdf

Incorporating Peer Recovery Support into Treatment Courts: Practice Guidelines for Treatment Court Professionals



Tara Kunkel, MSW
Rulo Strategies

November 2023
All Rise
Alexandria, Virginia

Jacqueline van Wormer, PhD
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All Rise



All Rise PRSS Core Values

1. Peer support is voluntary.
2. Peer supporters are hopeful.
3. Peer supporters are open-minded.
4. Peer supporters are empathetic.
5. Peer supporters are respectful.
6. Peer supporters facilitate change.
7. Peer supporters are honest and direct.
8. Peer support is mutual and reciprocal.
9. Peer support is equally shared power.
10. Peer support is strengths-focused.
11. Peer support is transparent.
12. Peer support is person-driven.

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Peer Support in King County Drug Court

Implementation

- Feedback from participants and graduates expressing a desire for peer support within the program.
- 2018: Contract with Peer WA for the first Drug Court peer using CJTA funding.
- 2020: Expansion to 2 peers.
- 2021: Expansion to 3 peers.
- Why Peer WA?
 - Organization led by King County Drug Court Graduate
 - Understanding that peer support in therapeutic courts can look different than in other settings
 - Provides additional resources
 - Stand alone locations
 - Each PRSS assigned to Drug Court is a program graduate

Excerpt from KCDDC Policy and Procedure Manual:

Peer Services Specialists (PSS)

DDCS contracts with Peer Washington to provide peer services to DDC participants. DDC PSS are based out of Peer Washington's Peer Kent location. DDC PSS's utilize their lived experience of addiction and recovery to connect with DDC participants and support them in navigating paths towards recovery. PSS' are King County Drug Diversion Court graduates. PSS' receive specialized training and supervision related to provision of peer services including boundaries, ethics, harm reduction, cultural responsiveness, and trauma-informed approaches. Within the first 6 months of hire, PSS' obtain Certified Peer Counselor (CPC) certification through the Washington State Health Care Authority, Recovery Coach certification through the nationally recognized Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) and Group Facilitator training through Peer Washington.

PSS' rotate between locations at the Peer Kent office and the DDCS office at the King County Courthouse. PSS' are also present during DDC hearings at the King County Courthouse in Seattle and the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent to provide outreach and support to DDC participants.

At DDC orientation and intake: PSS' share their own story, provide information about peer services, and meet with participants individually to conduct an assessment of Recovery Capital.

PSS' are able to meet with participants in custody, accompany participants via taxi to inpatient treatment intakes, facilitate peer support groups, and connect interested participants with recovery coaches to provide ongoing support.

PSS' encourage participants to practice honesty and self-report substance use or other challenges to their case manager, treatment provider, and DDC team. However, PSS' maintain participant confidentiality and will not share information without a participant's permission. While PSS' make notes in the DDC database to verify participant attendance at recovery coach sessions and support meetings or to confirm community service hours performed, they will not disclose the content of the sessions. DDC participants may choose to perform assigned community service hours at Peer Kent or attend sober support meetings there, however participation in Peer Kent's services is voluntary and should not be assigned as a specific sanction.

In addition to their role in providing direct support and referrals to DDC participants, PSS' serve an important role in policy discussions at DDC Business Meetings by sharing their own stories and perspectives from lived experience as prior DDC participants. The Peer Kent Program Manager, who supervises the PSS', also attends DDC Business Meetings and provides education on peer services and lived experience.

Recovery Coaches: While PSS(s) are expected to become CCAR certified recovery coaches, PSS(s) would not be matched as a recovery coach to an active DDC participant, unless requested by the participant. Instead, PSS(s) connect interested DDC participants with other certified recovery coaches and provide ongoing supervision and support to the recovery coaches who work with DDC participants. Whenever possible, DDC participants are matched with recovery coaches who are themselves graduates of DDC. (Note that recovery coaches are volunteers. Although recovery coaches receive a stipend for their volunteer service, they are not Peer Kent employees and therefore, are not covered on the general DDC Release of Information that includes Peer Kent. There should not be any exchange of information between recovery coaches and DDC team members other than the PSS(s).) Individual meetings with recovery coaches can be counted as a sober support credit with attendance verified by PSS(s).

Other Peer Kent Services: Peer Kent is open 365 days a year on a drop-in basis to DDC participants, graduates, and any community members seeking support. Peer Kent offers specialized support related to housing, employment, and family/parenting, access to Narcan, fentanyl test strips, and harm reduction resources, a variety of in-person and virtual support meetings, Recovery Coach Academy and group facilitator trainings, as well as volunteer opportunities. There is no sobriety requirement to participate in services at Peer Kent.

Duties

- Provide support as part of multidisciplinary team
- Participate in weekly Orientation for new participants
- Recovery Capital assessment
- Check in with participants at the Drug Court office
 - At least one PRSS in the Drug Court office during business hours
- Attend each court calendar
- Jail pick-ups
- Ride-a-long with participants to treatment and/or housing
- Assist participants in getting to appointments in the community
- Visit current and prospective participants in custody



PRSS Recruitment



Job Posting

Title:	Peer Services Specialist (PSS) – King County Drug Diversion Court (KCDDC)
Part/Full Time:	Full Time (40 hours/week with a starting schedule of Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)
Hourly/Salary:	Hourly

- Job posting sent to KCDDC Alumni.
- Interview panel includes PRSS Supervisor/Program Manager, Current PRSS, and KCDDC Treatment Coordinator.
- PRSS orientation includes Peer Kent and KCDDC.

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Peer Support in Municipal Courts

Implementation

- Judicial Officer recognized the importance of peer support to promote a trauma-informed, recovery-focused culture that empowers both staff and participants in a supportive justice environment.
- Federal Way Municipal Court
 - Feb 2022 First peer placed in Federal Way Municipal through AOC funding
 - July 2022: Second peer placed in Des Moines municipal
 - July 2022: Braided funding was secured to expand the project to Renton Municipal Court totaling 3 PRSSs
 - July 2024: Expansion of AOC funding to include a therapeutic courts coordinator for Federal Way and Des Moines.
- Why Peer WA?
 - Largest and oldest peer-run and peer-led organization in Washington State.
 - Prevalence of lived experience with the legal system among staff and leadership.
 - Availability of low barrier services for recovery that compliment the placement positions in the courts.



Duties

- Provide support as part of interdisciplinary team
- Presence at weekly Orientation for new participants.
- Attend each court calendar.
- Jail visits: Visit current and prospective participants in custody.
- Community Outreach: Engage with community resources to provide participants with access to services beyond the courtroom.
- Connection to Services: Assist with linking participants to housing, treatment, and employment resources.
- Always utilize a strength-based, non-judgmental, trauma-informed approach



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Training



PRSS Training

- Recovery Coach Academy (RCA): 40 hour intensive (in-house)
- Group Facilitator
- Pronouns
- Certified Peer Counselor (CPC): Through HCA
 - Peer Workforce Development is developing curriculum for transition from CPC to CPSS (Certified Peer Support Specialist)
- Communication Skills- destigmatizing language, person-first
- Ethics and Boundaries
- Cultural Humility
- Mental Health First Aid
- Trauma-informed Care
- Motivational Interviewing
- De-escalation





Ethics and Boundaries

Guideline 5



Ethics and Boundaries

- **Guideline 5: Peer recovery support specialists receive annual ethics training, and policies and procedures are in place to address ethics issues.**
 - **Confidentiality:** Peer recovery support specialists are required to maintain confidentiality regarding the personal information and experiences shared by the individuals they support.
 - **Boundaries:** Peer recovery support specialists maintain clear boundaries with the individuals they support to prevent the development of inappropriate or harmful relationships. Training for peer recovery support specialists includes discussions on recognizing when the support specialist is becoming too involved with a participant or when the participant seeking help is becoming too dependent on the support specialist.
 - **Dual relationships:** Peer recovery support specialists avoid dual relationships. Dual relationships may include sexual relationships, business relationships, or financial relationships.
- Boundaries protect the PRSS and the Therapeutic Court participant.
- Documentation and Advocacy: PRSS are expected to document participant progress while advocating for participants' rights and needs in a way that maintains confidentiality and respect for the individual's autonomy.

Peer Kent Policy & Procedures

- Clear guidelines and protocols for addressing ethical dilemmas.
- A structured process for reporting and managing ethics violations, ensuring accountability and trust within the court system.

S. Confidentiality Policy

1. Scope

All agency staff, board members, volunteers, students, researchers, inspectors/surveyors, observers of meetings or agency services.

2. Purpose

To reaffirm to members and the public that all those employed by or affiliated with Peer Washington, who have access to confidential client information, will safeguard the information entrusted to their care; to meet federal regulations regarding confidentiality of behavioral health or chronic illness client information; and to allow free exchange of confidential client information between employees of Peer Washington and those affiliated with the agency when it is proper to do so.

Job Performance Issues, Referral, and Treatment

If a supervisor (hereafter includes supervisor, manager, director, or executive) believes or suspects that an employee's job performance or behavior indicates a possible problem that may be a result of active alcohol or drug abuse, it is the responsibility of that person to notify the Chief Executive Officer, site Director or designated Compliance Officer. It is also the responsibility of the notifying supervisor to document any noted performance or behavior problems believed to be related to this abuse.

Policy

Peer Washington's Code of Ethics and Conduct ("Code") requires directors, officers, and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. Employees and representatives of Peer Washington must strive to practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

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Ethics

Strives for honesty, integrity and fairness in all actions; provides members and/or volunteers with the right services for their needs; respects each person's dignity and right to privacy; provides complete and accurate information; treats everyone equitably; respects individual rights and uniqueness; complies with all laws and regulations; responds to sensitive issues in an appropriate manner; strives to improve communication skills.

G. Sexual or Romantic Relationships with Members

Members and volunteers of Peer Washington may have a working relationship with Peer Washington staff and volunteers that requires that there be no potential conflicts of interest or appearance of impropriety. Peer Washington therefore prohibits employees and volunteers from engaging in a sexual or romantic relationship with a member who receives services or support directly from them or is in a supervisory capacity over that member, even when such a relationship is voluntary. If a pre-existing sexual or romantic relationship exists between an employee/volunteer and a volunteer/member prior to volunteering/membership at a Peer Washington location or engagement in a direct service relationship, the employee/volunteer may not act in any capacity where they have a real or perceived power differential over the volunteer/member. Violation of this policy will generally result in termination of the employee/volunteer, even if the volunteer or member claims responsibility and/or chooses to discontinue service.

H. Supervision of Family Members

Family members may not have supervisory responsibility for another family member or be employed in positions where a family relationship would create a conflict of interest, confidentiality, or audit problem. For purposes of this policy, the term "family" is defined as spouse or significant other, parent/step parent, child/step child, grandparent, grandchild, brother/brother-in-law, sister/sister-in-law, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin, in-laws

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Supervision

Guideline 4

Supervision: Peer-Led Approach

At Peer Kent, supervision is conducted by a peer who understands the unique dynamics of the PRSS role, focusing on shared understanding and collaboration.

- **Administrative:** New staff orientation, review documentation, planning and assigning tasks, etc.
- **Educational:** Continuing development that prioritizes ongoing personal and professional growth, tailored to the needs and challenges faced by PRSSs in their unique roles.
- **Supportive:** Supervisor maintains an open-door policy, ensuring accessibility and ongoing support for PRSSs. Encourage PRSSs to engage in reflective practice, where they discuss their experiences, challenges, and successes in a supportive and non-judgmental environment. Promote open dialogue where PRSSs can share insights, learn from each other, and enhance their skills.
- **Team Supervision:**
 - Structured, scheduled supervision between the supervisor and PRSSs.
 - Supervision happens on a weekly basis as a team between the supervisor and PRSSs.
- **1:1 Supervision:**
 - Additional one-on-one supervision is available as needed to address specific challenges or support individual development.
- **Court Staff Check-ins:**
 - The PRSS supervisor has bi-weekly check-ins with court staff, including the Program Manager, Court Administrator, and/or other relevant personnel, to ensure alignment and address any concerns.



Benefits and Considerations

Benefits

Program Benefit

- Participant “buy in”
- Greater opportunity for connection
- Increased engagement
- Increased compliance

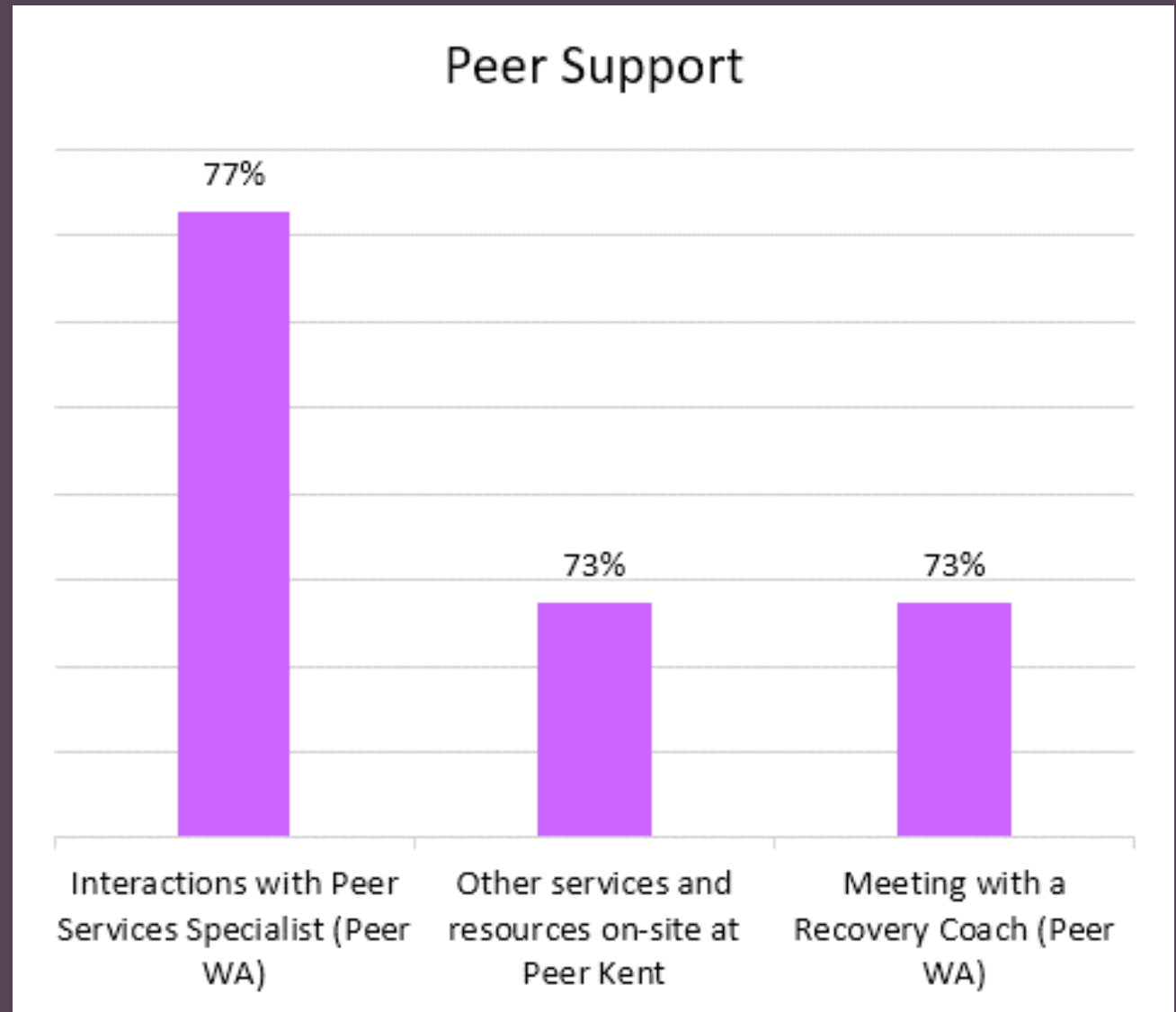
Participant Benefit

- Meaningful encouragement
- Safe place
 - Peer Kent is open 365 days a year
- Individual and group recovery support
- Community Service
- Resource connection, including housing, education, employment, health care, mental health services and more
- Support regardless of status in Therapeutic Court
- Connection to community

Feedback from KCDDC Participants

What was MOST helpful about peer support?

- “Someone to talk to.”
- “Branching out of my comfort zone.”
- “Knowing I was not alone.”
- “My peer support specialist has been extremely supportive and helpful for me. I can count on him to be there for me and to offer the best advice and support he possibly can.”



Considerations

1. PRSS Role: PRSSs should **not** provide legal advice, diagnose conditions, or manage cases. Their role is to offer peer emotional support, share lived-experiences, and connect participants to resources
2. Role in Staffings: PRSS attend staffings to **listen**, but do not share participant information to preserve confidentiality
3. Program Understanding: PRSS have a clear understanding of the program as participant graduates and through working as part of a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary team
4. Diversity and representation: PRSS should reflect the diversity of the participants to ensure culturally relevant support
5. PRSS vs. Alumni: Clear distinctions between PRSS and alumni roles maintain boundaries and ensure appropriate support.



Cost



- According to SAMHSA, “[PRSS] are essential ingredients in developing a recovery-oriented system in which clinical treatment plays an important, but singular, role ... treatment without other recovery supports has often not been sufficient in helping individuals to maintain long-term recovery.”
- External evaluators of King County’s Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) program have documented the delivery of PRSS by Peer Seattle, including coaching as a centerpiece of the services, has significant outcomes.
 - This evaluation reported in emergency department admissions and jail bookings of 24% reductions and 72% respectively for participants who engaged with SUD PRSS. (King County MIDD 2023 Annual Report).
- Studies show cost benefit / return on investment for peers in other settings as there is evidence that peers prevent / reduce hospitalization, increase treatment engagement and quality of life measures. (Evidence for Peer Support May 2019.pdf (mhanational.org))
- Peer services reach populations current health systems fail to engage. (Sokol, Rebecca, Fisher, Edwin, 2016)
- Peer services reduce rates of relapse among people with substance use disorders. (Butler Center, 2021)



Peer Support after Therapeutic Court Graduation

Post Graduation Support in King County Drug Court

- Post graduation check-in with Treatment Coordinator for 6 months
 - Treatment Coordinator initiated
 - Voluntary and incentivized
 - Consistent (1x/week to 1x/month)
 - Continued access to Drug Court Resources
- Alumni Groups
 - Therapeutic Court specific
 - Washington State Therapeutic Court Alumni Group
- Recovery Coaching
- Certified Peer Counselor training



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Questions?

Additional Resources

- All Rise
 - [Incorporating Peer Recovery Support into Treatment Courts: Practice Guidelines for Treatment Court Professionals](#)
 - [Ask the Expert](#)
- WA State Health Care Authority [Peer Support and Counseling](#)
- [SAMHSA's National Model Standards for Peer Support Certification](#)
- [Intentionalpeersupport.org](https://intentionalpeersupport.org)
- [Rentonreporter.com/life/peer-counselor-offers-hope-in-renton-courts/](https://rentonreporter.com/life/peer-counselor-offers-hope-in-renton-courts/)

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