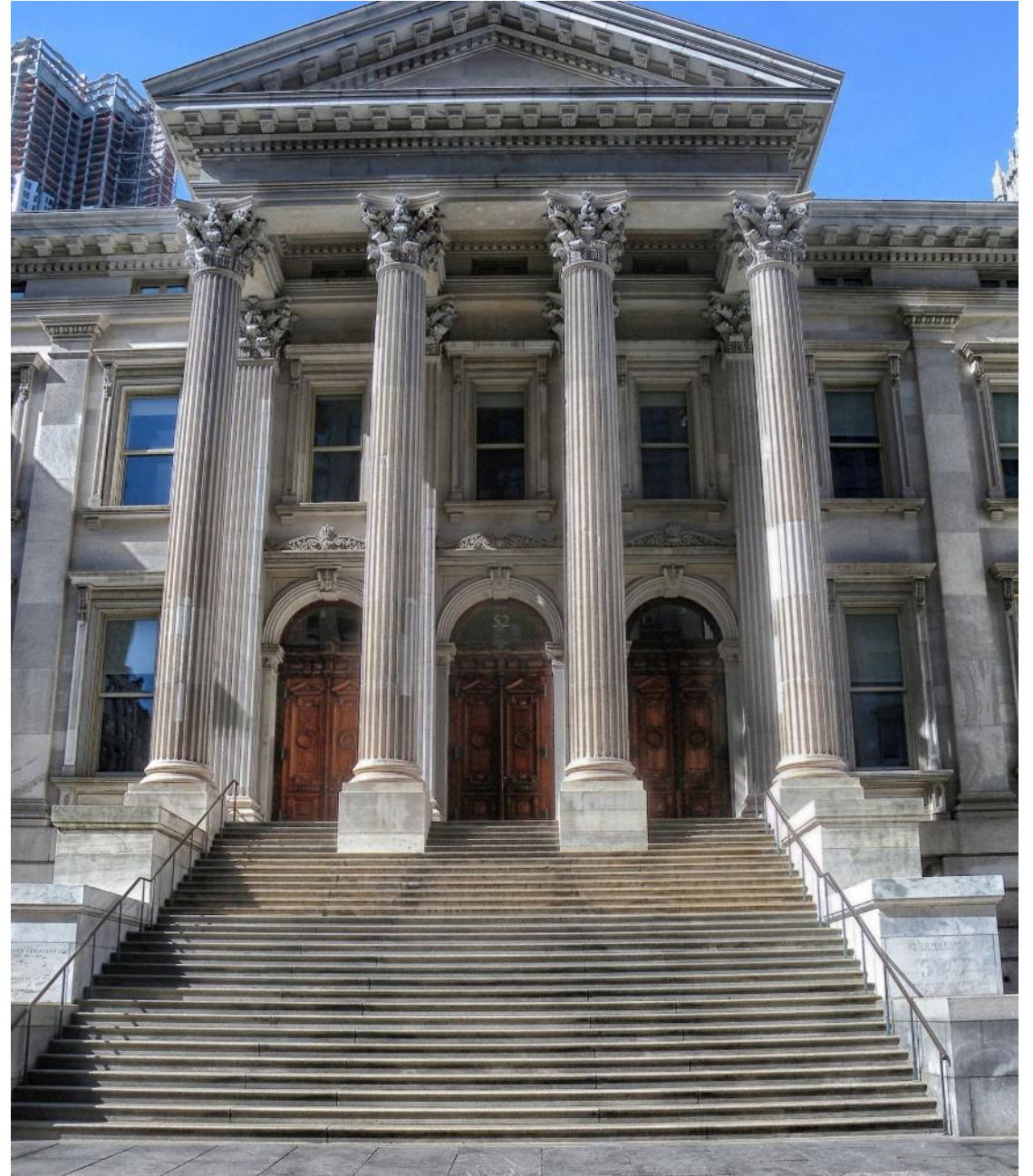




Peer Recovery Support in Treatment Courts

Guidelines for the Field

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RISE24





How did we get here?

Definitions, certification processes, and operations



Building the Guidelines



- Field awareness
- Academic, practitioner, and peer partnerships
- Extensive literature analysis
- Review of all state certification requirements and code of ethics
- Survey of adult drug court field
- Defining the position
- Draft of Guidelines
 - Released December 2023
 - Peer reviewed
 - Living document subject to change based on research updates

The background features a teal gradient with several colorful speech bubbles (yellow, red, pink, white) containing question marks. On the right side, there are blue silhouettes of hands reaching out towards the text.

What is Peer Support?

Peer support is defined as:

“... a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful.”

What is a Peer Recovery Support Specialist?



A peer recovery support specialist is a person in recovery from a behavioral health condition (mental health, substance use, or co-occurring) with the proper training and experience to work in a peer support provider role who provides mentoring, guidance, and support services to others who are experiencing behavioral health challenges.



4 Key Elements of PRSS Definitions

Lived Experience: SUD, SMI, etc.

Recovery: Active participation in a process of change

Specialist: Certification (state), training (agency), or education

Support: Ability to assist peers to navigate systems, treatment, life, etc.

Typical Tasks

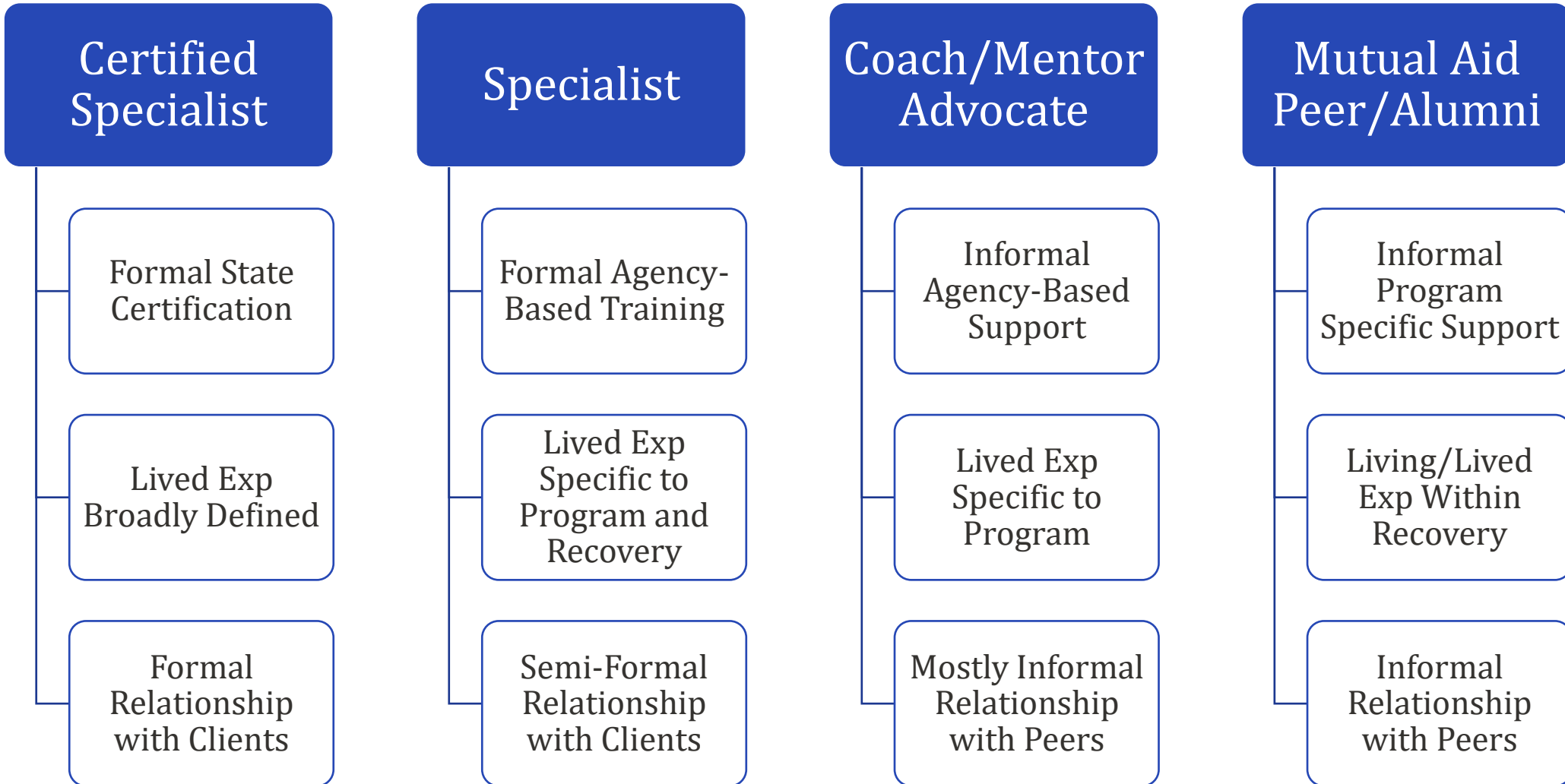
- developing formal and informal supports
- assisting in the development of goals
- serving as a positive role model
- sharing experiential knowledge, hope, and skills
- leading non-clinical recovery support groups
- mentoring and assisting the individual with problem-solving, goal setting, and skill-building
- advocating for people in recovery
- reinforcing, guiding, and ensuring that recovery is possible and is built on multiple strengths, coping abilities, and the resources of the individual
- providing and supporting linkages to recovery support services



Personal Characteristics Identified in Research

- Leadership skills
- Communication
- High sense of empathy
- Relatability, active listening skills
- Firm but flexible
- Knowledge of coping mechanisms
- Experience
- Personable
- Works well under pressure

A Continuum of Peer Support: Formal to Informal





Why do we expect peer support to work?

Quantitative Research

Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT) and Quasi-Experimental (QE)

Substance Use Disorder, Serious Mental Illness, and Co-Occurring Disorders

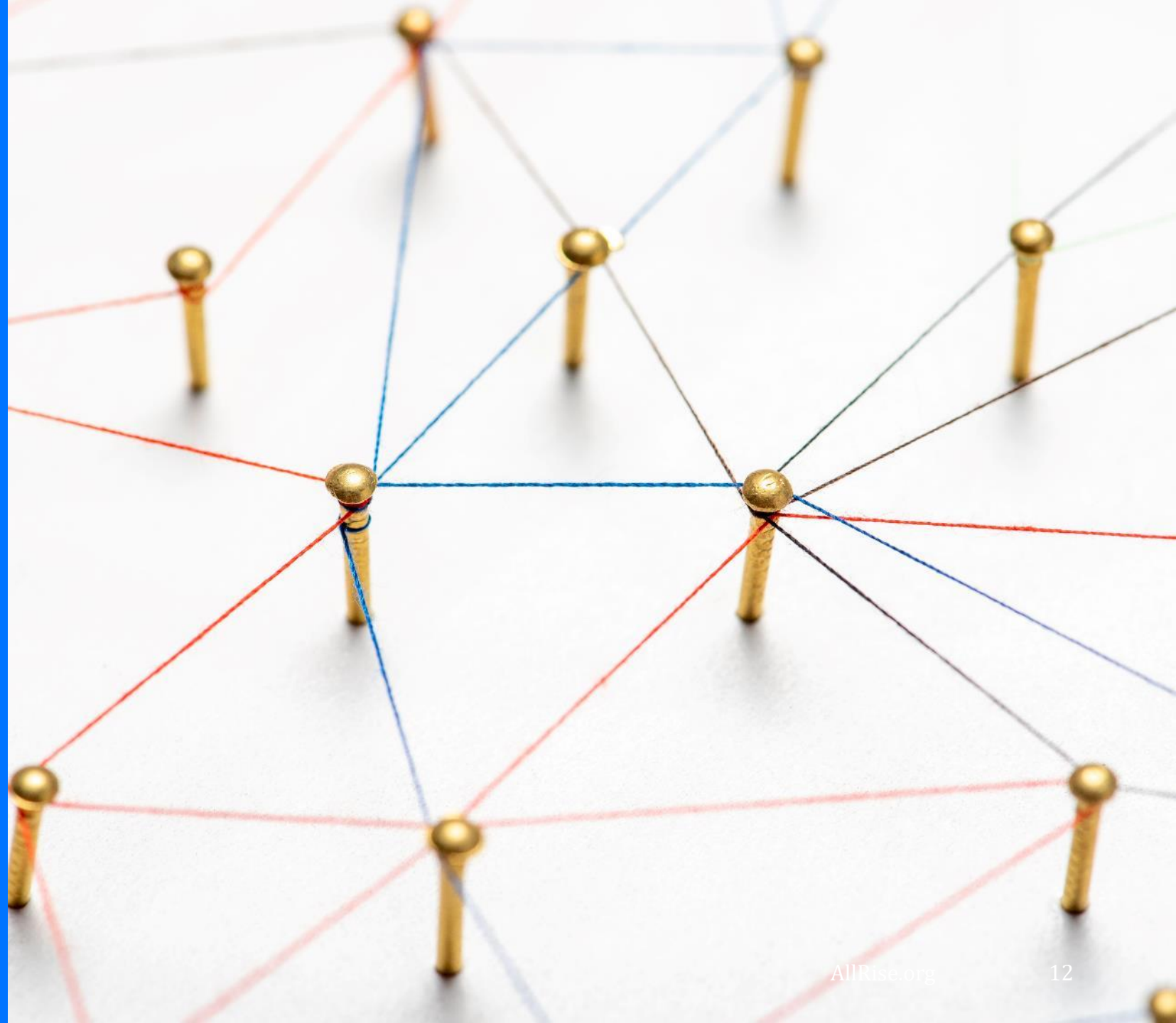
- **Overall, positive effects appearing small to moderate in magnitude**
- Small samples, short follow-up periods, mixed intervention types, poorly defined PS roles, unknown or weak dosage, etc.
- Some findings within studies showed treatment-as-usual performed just as well

Drug Court

- **Overall, mixed results leaning toward positive**
- Belenko, et al - Mixed results: reduced recidivism, increased engagement in DC. No effect on substance use or treatment engagement
- Smelson, et al - Positive results: reduced alcohol/drug use, jail time, hospitalizations; increased employment



Survey of the Adult Drug Court Field

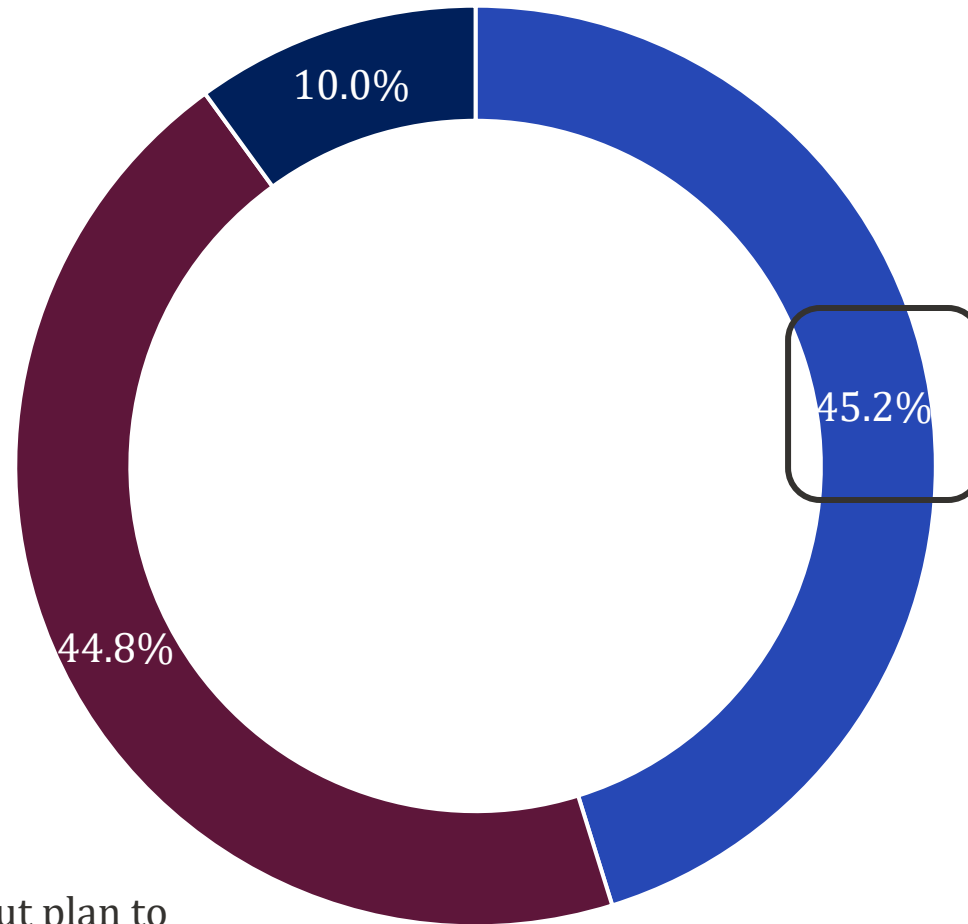


Peer Recovery Support Services Survey



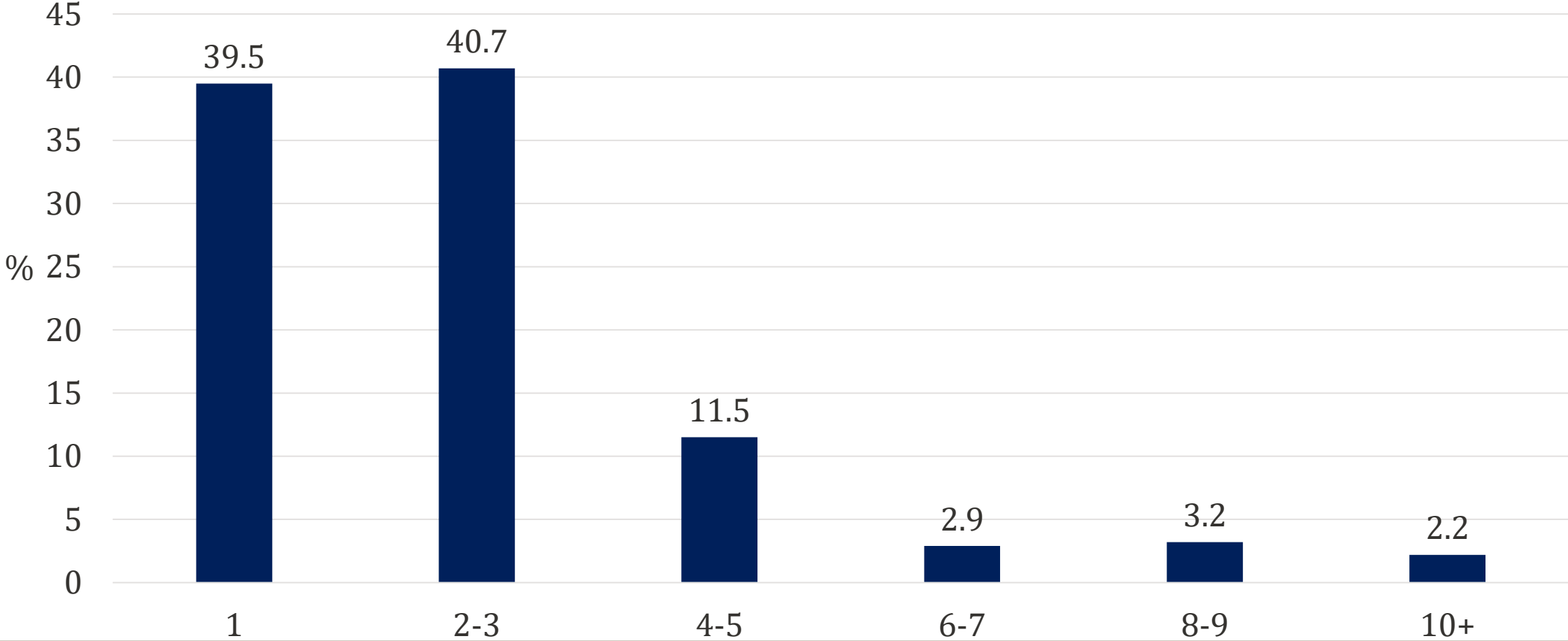
- Objective → better understand how adult treatment courts are using peer recovery support specialists within their programs, the roles/responsibilities associated with these positions, etc.
- Online survey sent through Qualtrics to all statewide/territory coordinators requesting that the survey be distributed to all adult treatment court coordinators in their state/territory
- **712** surveys were completed

Currently have any PRSS positions involved with your ACT? (n=712)

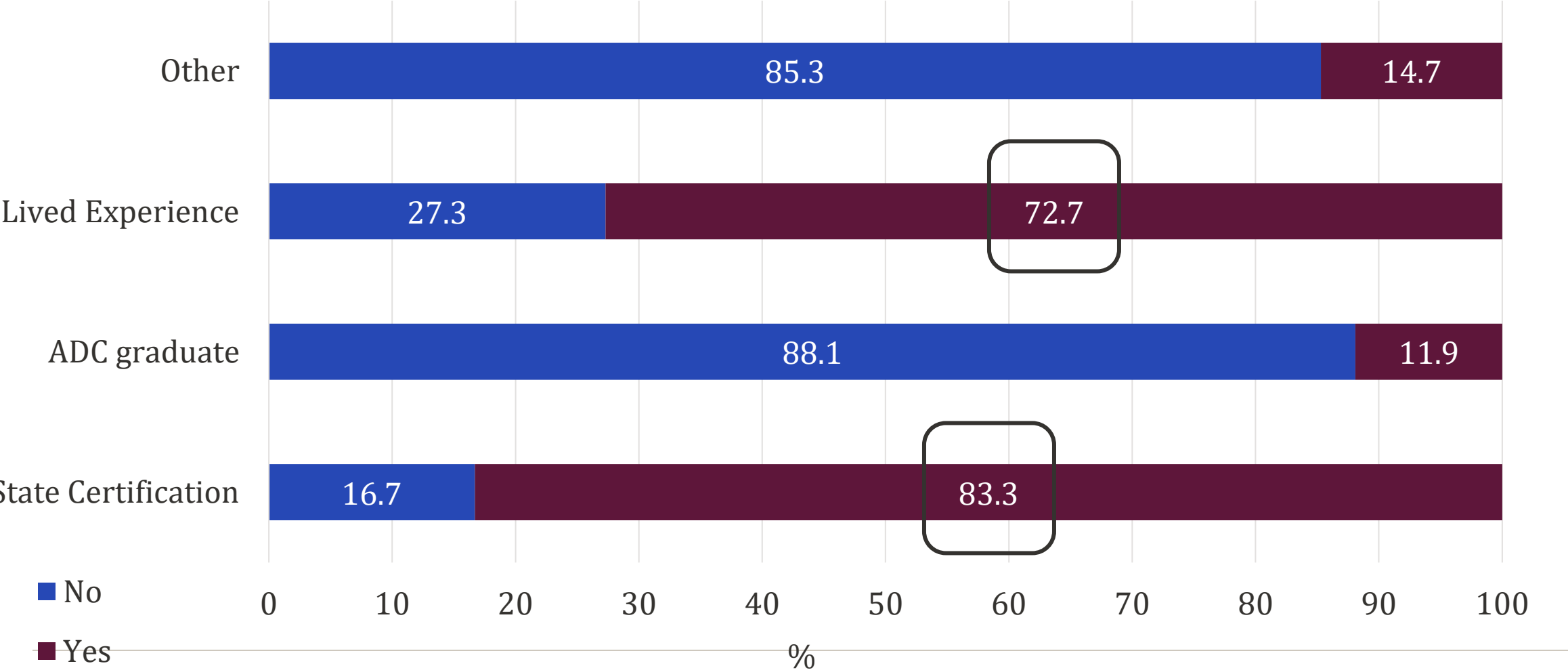


■ Yes ■ No ■ Not currently, but plan to

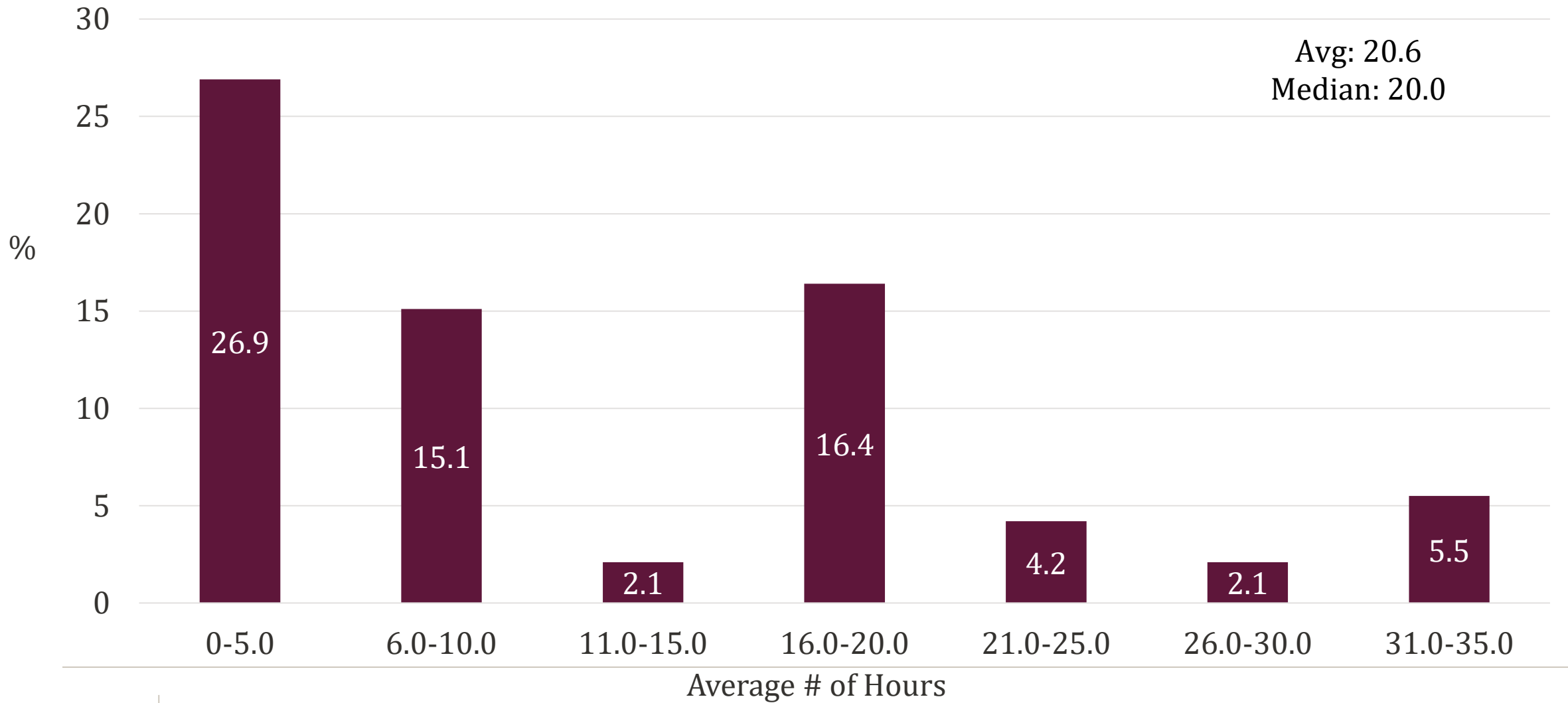
Total Number of PRSSs in ATC Program (n=314)



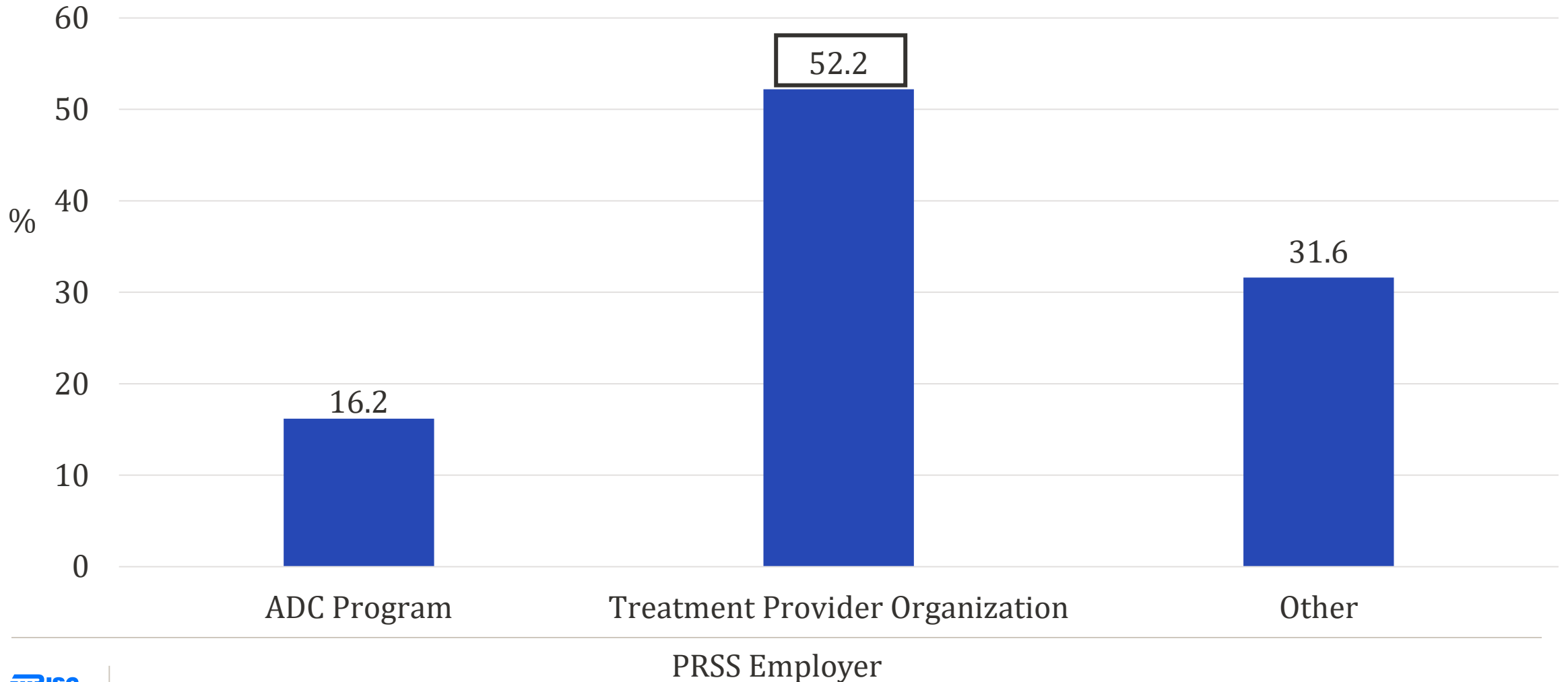
What are the required qualifications for the PRSS involved with your ATC? (n=293)



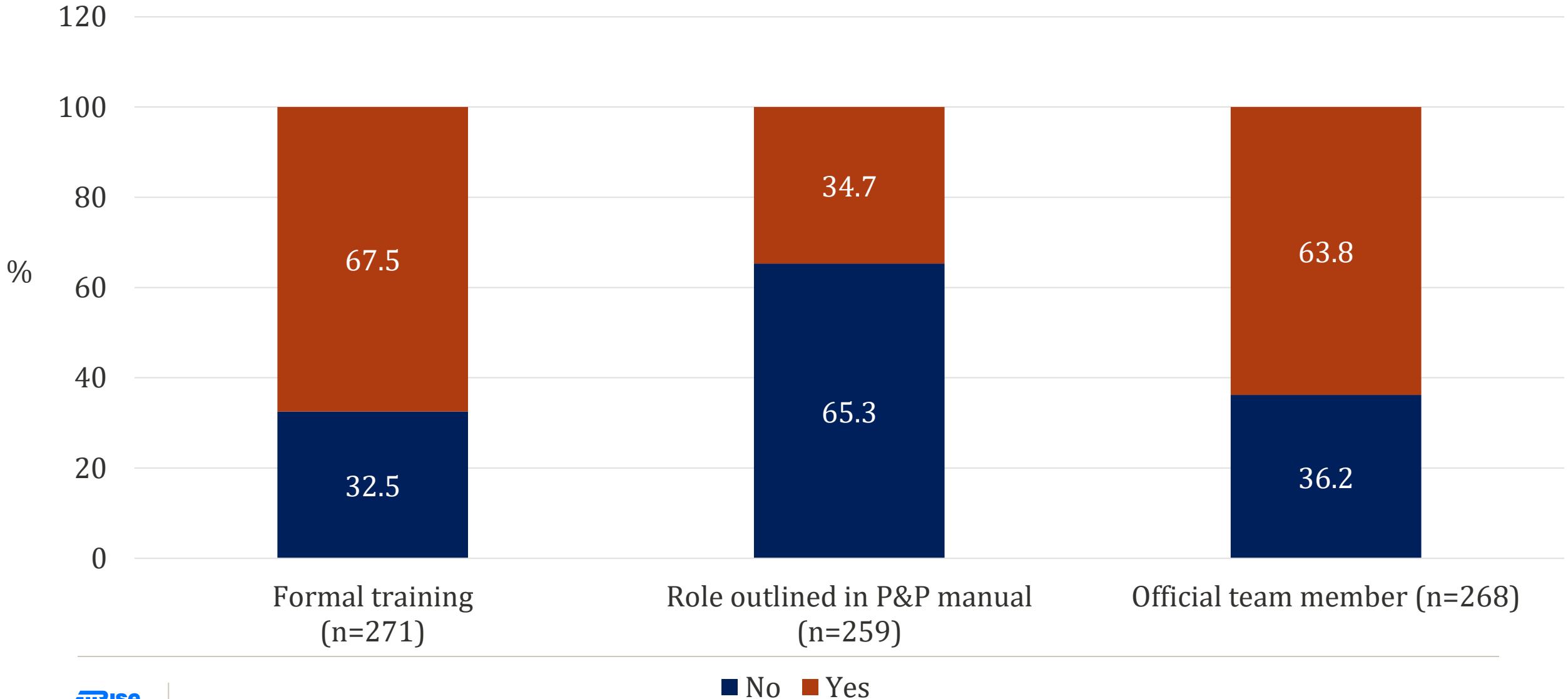
How many hours per week (on average) does the PRSS work within your ATC? (n=238)



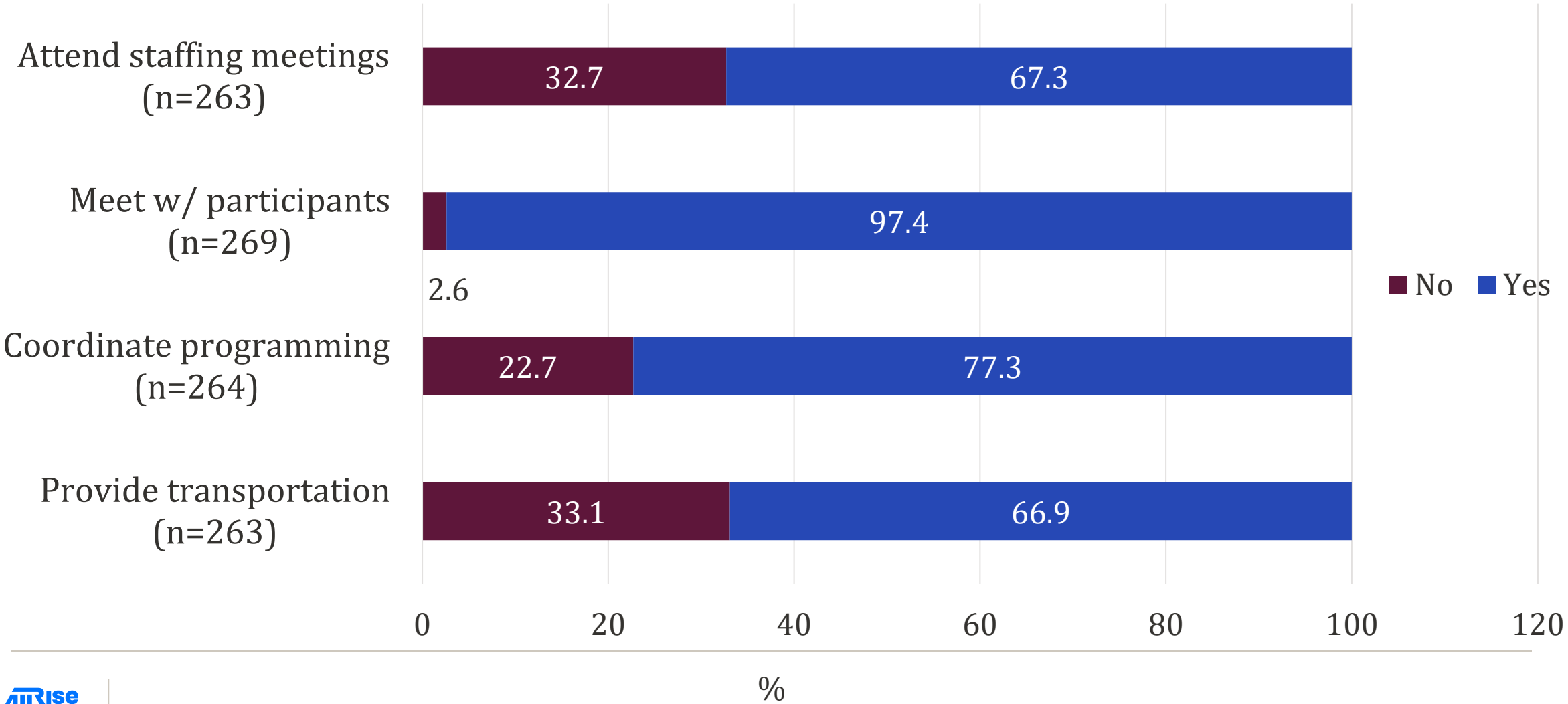
Who employs the PRSS involved with your program? (n=272)



PRSS & ATC Team



PRSS Roles/Responsibilities



Summary

- Less than half of ATC programs that responded to the survey currently have a PRSS
- Majority indicate must have state certification, lived experience
- Average hourly rate ~\$18
- Treatment provider is employer in over half of the programs
- Formal training and/or official team member
- Close to 100% of programs report PRSS meets with participants
- Over 2/3 report PRSS attends staffing



Guidelines for Peer Recovery Support Specialist in Treatment Court

Guideline 1

Treatment court staff receives training on the core competencies of peer recovery support.




Implementation Principles

- Peer support services are incorporated into the treatment court program as an optional recovery support service and not mandated.
- Before implementing peer recovery support services, training is provided for all treatment court team members.
- Treatment court staff are given the opportunity to discuss any concerns they have about incorporating peer recovery response services into the treatment court program.

Guideline 2

The treatment court has written roles and responsibilities that align with peer recovery support services' nationally recognized competencies and ethics.

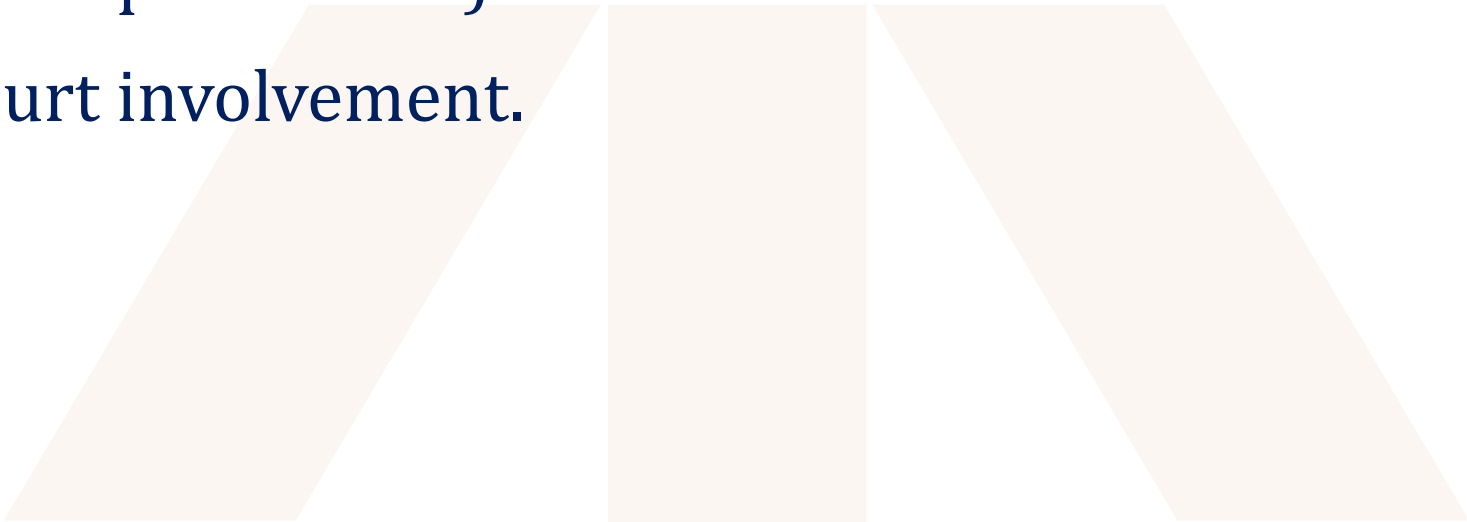


Implementation Principles

- The treatment court has a written description of the roles and responsibilities of the peer recovery support specialist.
- If peer recovery support specialists attend staffing, they abstain from directly weighing in on sanctions, incentives and discussions centered on termination.
- Reasonable caseload sizes for a peer recovery support specialist are established (20–30 range).

Implementation Principles

- Minimum of two years of sustained recovery before serving as peer (and/or follow state requirements)
- One-year post-treatment court involvement.



Guideline 3

The treatment court program has established processes for recruiting, hiring, and orienting peer recovery support specialists to the treatment court.

Implementation Principles

- The treatment court and/or agency has a written job description.
- The treatment court and/or agency has a written orientation plan for peer recovery support specialists.
- If a peer recovery support specialist has not had previous experience in an office setting, additional training is provided on operating the photocopier, telephone system, and other office equipment.
- Plan introductory activities with the team.

Guideline 4

The treatment court ensures that peer recovery support specialists receive regular and ongoing external supervision from qualified staff.



Implementation Principles

- The peer recovery support specialist supervisor:
 - ✓ Has a fundamental understanding of the principles of recovery and the role of peer support services in building and sustaining recovery goals.
 - ✓ Understands the core competencies of peer recovery support workers.
 - ✓ Has been trained on the best practice standards associated with the treatment court.
 - ✓ Has knowledge and awareness of the roles and contributions of the peer recovery support specialist and knows the difference between the peer recovery support specialist's role and other treatment court team members' roles.
 - ✓ Advocates for the role of peer support services in the organization in which they work and in the community.

Implementation Principles

- Peer recovery support specialists working within an agency regularly network, meet, and debrief their roles in support of each other.
- If there is only one peer support specialist within an agency or organization, the treatment court team works to establish a regional network of support with fellow peer support specialists from other treatment courts in the area.

Guideline 5

Peer recovery support specialists receive annual ethics training, and policies and procedures are in place to address ethics issues.



Implementation Principles

- Policies and procedures are in place that address appropriate confidentiality, boundaries, and dual relationships.
- Peer recovery support specialists participate in annual ethics training.
- Treatment agencies have policies and procedures in place to protect the confidentiality and rights of any peer recovery support specialists who also currently receive services from the agency where they are employed (or have received services from the agency in the past).

Implementation Principles

- Treatment courts that use peer recovery support specialists who previously graduated from the treatment court have policies and procedures to protect the confidentiality of the employee and his or her records.

Additional Operational Considerations

- Support professionalization via training and coaching
- Provide ongoing training opportunities
- Monitor for burn-out and ensure self-care



Questions Discussion



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