

# Practical Implications of Peer Recovery Support in Treatment Courts

# Session Background

- Peer recovery support services (PRSS) are essential to implementing a recovery-oriented approach to addressing opioid and other substance use disorders (SUD).
- PRSS target recovery outcomes that improve quality of life and decrease symptoms of mental illness and substance use.
- The role of peer support in criminal justice settings has expanded, revealing encouraging trends.
- Peer supports are being implemented in opioid intervention and other treatment courts, as their lived experience affords them a unique ability to connect with participants in ways other court personnel may not.
- Specialized treatment courts have begun to recognize the value of peer support in family and juvenile drug courts, specifically. However, research on the efficacy of peer support in these court systems is severely limited.

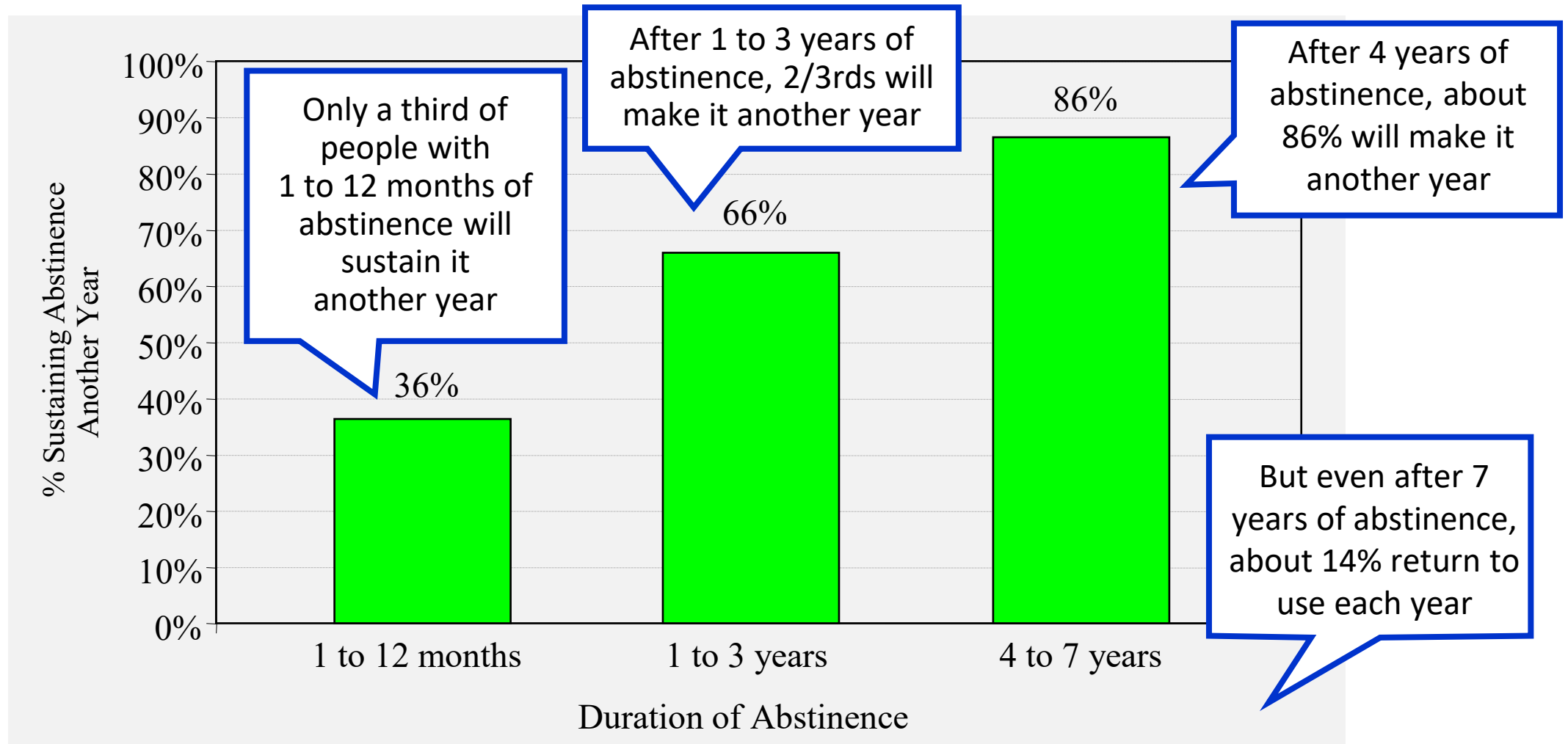
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# Learning Objectives

- This session will:
  - Define peer practice, peer practitioner, and peer recovery support services
  - Explore the roles of peer practitioners in treatment court settings
  - Examine the essential elements of implementing and effectively incorporating peer supports in treatment courts
  - Review the research findings for PRSS for adult, family, and adolescent treatment courts

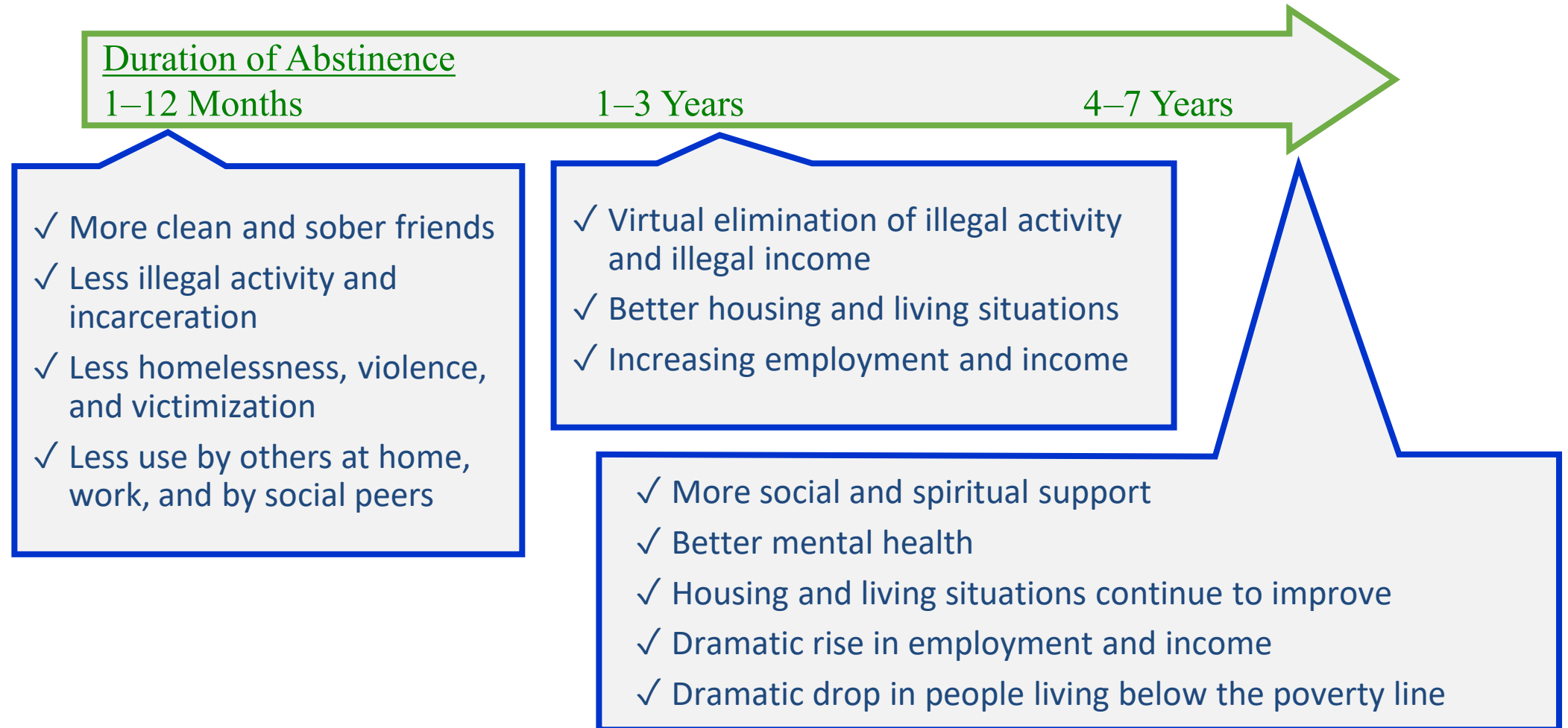
# Defining Peer Practice, Peer Practitioners, and Peer Recovery Support Services

# Likelihood of Sustaining Abstinence Grows Over Time



Source: Dennis, Foss & Scott (2007)

# Average Progression of Recovery



Dennis, M.L., Foss, M.A., & Scott, C.K (2007). An eight-year perspective on the relationship between the duration of abstinence and other aspects of recovery. *Evaluation Review*, 31(6), 585-612.

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# Peer Practice = Story + Skills + Service

- Story:** Experience that comes from a personal history of, or exposure to:
- (1) substance use disorder;
  - (2) the process of change; and
  - (3) a sustainable life in recovery
- Skills:** Expertise in a variety of methods and approaches for applying that knowledge and experience
- Service:** Focus on helping others establish, and live in, their own definition and pathway of recovery across a lifetime

Adaptation of Thomasina Borkman, 1976; Ruth Riddick, 2018

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# Peer Practitioners are Professionals

- Education → practice specific
- Ethics → profession specific
- Certification → role-specific
  - Certified Recovery Peer Advocate (CRPA) (Medicaid billing)
  - Certified Addiction Recovery Coach
  - Certified Peer Specialists (mental health system only)

Ruth Riddick, 2020

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# Peer Practitioners – Key Competencies

- Listening, facilitating, guiding, encouraging
- Leveling power differentials
- Helping others to gain hope, explore recovery, and achieve life goals
- Reinforcing voice and choice
- Building on strengths (**recovery capital**) to develop solid recovery foundation
- Developing person-owned recovery plans
- Applying trauma-informed and culturally appropriate strategies
- Role modeling successful recovery

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# Peer Recovery Support Services (PRSS)

- Provided by individuals with “lived experience” of addiction and recovery
- Professional and nonclinical
- Distinct from case management and treatment
- Distinct from mutual aid supports, such as 12-step groups
- Provide links to professional treatment, health and social services, and support resources within communities

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# Peer Recovery Support Services (PRSS)

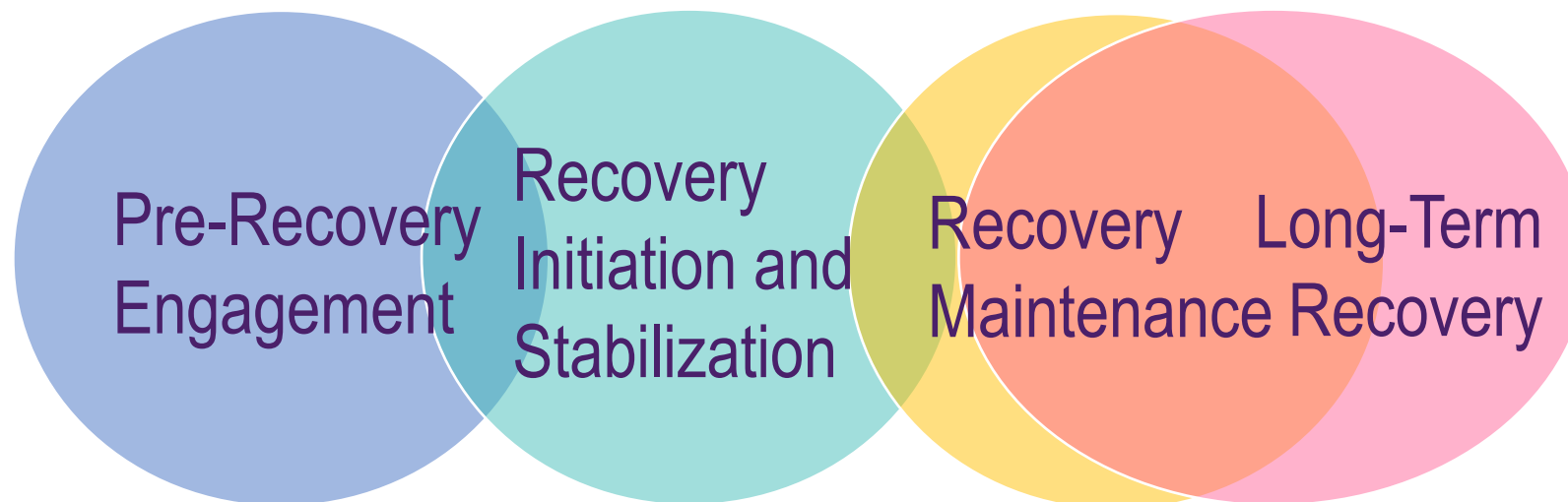
## Recovery happens in community.

- Ready-made pro-social environment
- Focus on building trusting *relationships*
- Use recovery community resources and assets
- Model the benefits and expectations of a life in recovery
- Promote an individual's choices and goals
- Provide entry and navigation to health and social service systems
- Build recovery capital

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# What PRSS Do #1: Engage Individuals in Change

**Peer supports engage individuals across the continuum of addiction recovery—  
and keep them engaged**



## How Peers Engage Individuals in Change:

- Peer-facilitated educational and support groups
- Peer-connected and -navigated health and community supports
- Peer-operated recovery residences
- Recovery community centers
- Peer telephone continuing support
- Crisis support services

Adapted from William White

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# What PRSS Do #2: Build Recovery Capital

- In assisting people to achieve their recovery goals, it is often necessary to help them assess and build their **Recovery Capital**
- **Recovery Capital** is the sum of the strengths and supports—both internal and external—that are available to help someone initiate and sustain long-term recovery from addiction

**Peer supports create, build, reinforce, and strengthen Recovery Capital**

Granfield and Cloud, 1999, 2004; White, 2006



# The Importance of Recovery Capital

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# Recovery

## SAMHSA 4 Major Dimensions

**Betty Ford Institute Consensus Panel:**  
(2007, p. 222) recovery is “a voluntarily maintained lifestyle characterized by sobriety, personal health and citizenship.”

**SAMHSA:**

“A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self- directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.”

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# Common Themes?

There are common themes across these definitions

The process of recovery is not just about abstinence

Includes:

- Empowerment
- Well-being
- Quality of life
- Connectedness



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# Substance Use Disorder Research

- Causes, correlates, and consequences
- Clinical interventions (best practices) and treatment course
- Use of medication
- Limitations
  - Measure days of abstinence
  - Failure to focus on long-term functioning and well-being.

(Kelly et al, 2019; Laudet, 2011)

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# Understanding Recovery Capital

All the personal and tangible resources a person has and needs in order to initiate and sustain recovery.

(Granfield & Cloud, 1999; Laudet and Best, 2010; White & White, 2008)

Research is varied, but generally three to six elements of recovery capital:

- Human
- Financial
- Social
- Community
- Cultural

# Recovery Capital

## Personal Capital

## Cultural Capital

Divided into both human and financial capital

Full continuum of treatment

### Human Capital includes:

Access to diverse resources that are valued

Local recovery efforts and supports

Culturally prescribed and supported pathways of recovery

Transportation  
Shelter

Recovery norms are valued in the community

# Social Capital

## Relationships

Family

Friends

Supportive social relationships that are centered around recovery

Relational connections

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## What PRSS Do #3: Improve Outcomes

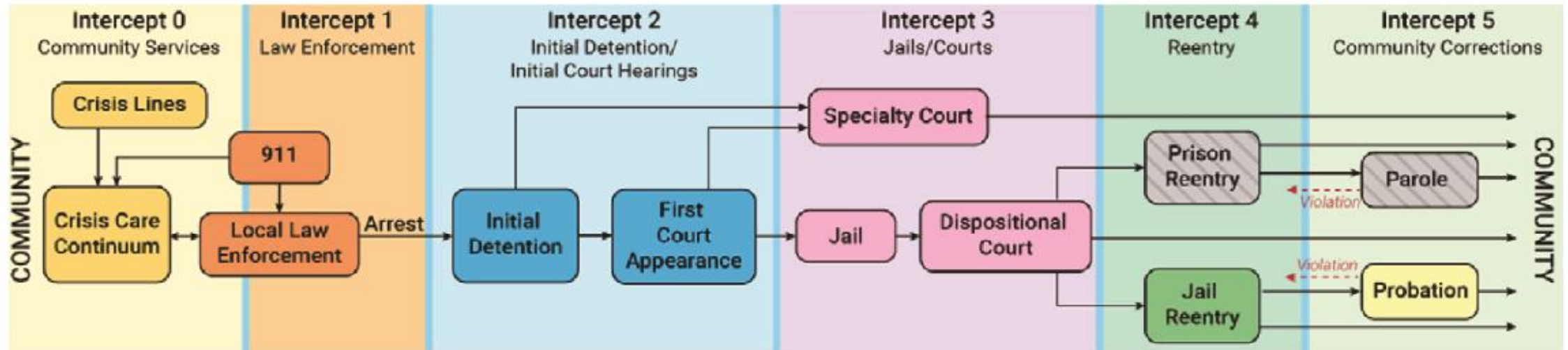
- Decrease involvement in criminal justice system
- Reduce return to use rates
- Rapid re-engagement following return to use
- Improve psychiatric symptoms
- Decrease hospitalizations and length of stay in hospitals
- Decrease homelessness
- Increase community and civic engagement

## What PRSS Do # 4: Save Money

- Decreased criminal justice involvement **equals savings**
- Decreased emergency services use, hospitalizations, and lengths of stay in hospital **equals savings**
- Decreased homelessness **equals savings**
- Increased preventative care and screening/ treatment for disease **equals savings**

# Peer Roles in Treatment Courts

# Peer Practitioner Roles Across the SIM



Source: SAMHSA GAINS Center/ PRA Inc.

## Examples of Peer Services at Each Intercept

**Peer Navigators** assist with service linkages and follow-up for individuals who survive overdose

**Peer Crisis Interventionists** integrated into mobile crisis outreach/ crisis intervention teams and Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams

**Peer Recovery Specialists** offer comprehensive peer supports—including harm reduction and recovery planning, support group facilitations, and telephone recovery supports—in recovery community organizations, other community-based settings, and within behavioral health treatment programs

In pre-arrest deflection or diversion programs that engage individuals based on risk factors and needs, **Peer Recovery Coaches** help to:

- Develop recovery plans
- Connect to community services
- Keep people engaged through a variety of activities

**Peer Advocates:**

- Help individuals to process what has happened and prepare for what is coming next
- Explain the arrest, detention, and arraignment processes
- Ensure that the individual feels safe and respected and
- Give the individual hope that they can cope with criminal justice system involvement while recovering from mental and substance use disorders

Through specialty courts and diversion programs, **Forensic Peer Specialists** offer comprehensive peer supports, including recovery planning, recovery coaching, support groups, and other recovery supports as part of the services

Within jails, **Peer Recovery Coaches** offer peer support groups and connect individuals with a range of recovery supports that can be accessed when a person is released on bail.

In correctional peer programs, **Peer Recovery Coaches** provide emotional support, promote addiction and mental health recovery, and foster general health and wellness.

**Peer Reentry Coaches:**

- Assertively connect individuals with community-based services, including comprehensive peer recovery supports as a part of planning for reentry
- Offer recovery planning, recovery management, and system navigation, including connection to recovery housing
- Support reaching goals for desistance, employment, and education

**Peer Navigators**

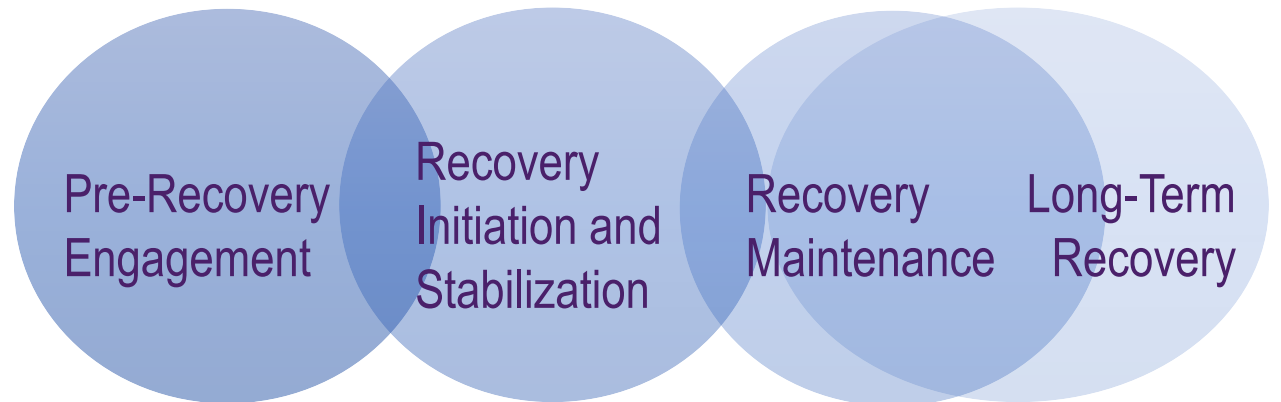
ensure all individuals under community supervision have access to recovery supports that help maintain a life in recovery, balancing the responsibilities of meeting the provisions and conditions of their probation or parole with other daily-living needs, including housing, employment, and benefits.

# Essential Elements of Peer Implementation in Treatment Courts

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# Opportunities in Integrating Peer Practitioners

- Add new perspective to multidisciplinary team
- Engage participants in broader/deeper way
- Strengthen motivation for change, identify and remove barriers
- Build recovery capital
- Improve participant outcomes





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# Essential Components of Sustained Recovery

- Safe and affordable place to live
- Steady employment and job readiness
- Education and vocational skills
- Life and recovery skills
- Health and wellness
- Recovery support networks
- Sense of belonging and purpose
- Community and civic engagement

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# Essential Elements for Peer Integration in Treatment Courts

- Certified peers
- Pre-court/early engagement with peer practitioners
- Access
- Recovery Capital Assessment
- Recovery planning and recovery check-ins
- Recovery peer support groups
- Availability of other peer supports
- Linkage to broader recovery community
- Post-court engagement

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# Challenges in Integrating Peer Practitioners: Stigma

- Stigma can occur within the service delivery system itself.
- May be overt or experienced in less overt ways such as "microaggressions" defined as “brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership”.
- Microaggressions can be verbal, behavioral, or environmental and are often unintentional and unconscious.
- Microaggressions typically fall into 2 categories:
  - 1) negative messages about peers' personal circumstances
  - 2) negative messages about the role of the peer practitioner

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# A Peer's Perspective on Stigma

- Katie Donovan holds dual licensure as a Certified Peer Recovery Advocate in New York, and a Certified Recovery Specialist in Pennsylvania. She has worked with clients with SUD, for the past 5 years, in outpatient and jail settings.
- “I remember an administrator laughing at me one time when I said I was off to an AA meeting stating, ‘you’re not like them.’”
- Role was frequently described to clients as being ‘more like a sister or friend.’”
- Role confusion can lead to problems with client engagement and trust, as well as reduced confidence for the peer specialist.
- “People struggling with addiction, their family members, and society want hope, and as peers we can help to represent that. I thought I was on an island all alone for the longest part of my addiction. Meeting people in treatment and meetings made the difference. As a peer, I want to share that hope with everyone.”

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# Additional Challenges in Integrating Peer Practitioners

- Aligning visions, philosophies, values, and organizational cultures of program partners
- Clearly defining appropriate roles and tasks
- Clearly defining processes and practices
- Scheduling regular time for problem-solving and refining processes
- Supervision
- Ethical dilemmas

# Research for PRSS in Specialty Courts

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# Specialty Court – History

- Since the late 1980s, treatment courts, problem-solving courts, or specialty courts have developed into a widely used approach to address the needs of offenders with substance use disorders (SUDs) and/or mental health issues.
- By working to resolve the underlying personal issues related to justice involvement, these courts disrupt the cycle of relapse, crime, and reincarceration.
- The first—and arguably most well-known—of these courts were drug treatment courts, launched in Dade County; family courts, mental health courts, and Veterans’ courts followed.
- There are now more than 3,000 such courts in the U.S., serving approximately 120,000 individuals annually.

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# Peer Recovery Support Services for Adolescents

- To date, most peer support for youth are largely implemented by adults rather than peers.
- Peer support has been an essential component for successful recovery in the adult mental health and substance abuse systems.
- The same support is urgently needed for youth, but peer support for youth must be developmentally appropriate and specific to the unique needs of youth in recovery.
- In the field of juvenile justice, the emphasis is less on youth peer support and more on family support.



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# Peer Recovery Support Services for Families

- Disease of addiction affects the entire family.
- Social capital, one of the four components of recovery capital, includes relations with family and support networks and can positively impact recovery outcomes.
- Grounded in many of the same philosophies/values as individual peer recovery support. Support is not clinical or connected to treatment in any way.
- Services commonly include:
  - Addiction and recovery-related information and education
  - Peer-facilitated support groups
  - Parent skills training
  - Crisis support
  - System navigation, including health care, treatment, and criminal justice
  - Community-building activities (BRSS TACS, n.d.)
- Research shows that those engaged in family peer support experience personal and interpersonal successes. (BRSS TACS, n.d.) (Kelly, Fallah-Sohy, Cristello, Bergman, 2017)

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# Future Directions for Peer Supports in Specialty Courts

- Implement youth-led peer supports
- Clearly defined roles/job descriptions
- Investigate ongoing sustainability metrics
- Integrate peers into crisis support services connected to law enforcement
- Utilize peer supports, across multiple domains, to build infrastructure to increase community recovery capital
- Conduct research into efficacy and evaluation outcomes
- Establish comprehensive best practices

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TTA Requests:

<https://www.cossapresources.org/Program/TTA#Providers>

# Questions?



BJA's

# Comprehensive

Opioid, Stimulant,  
and Substance Abuse

Program