

**PEER ADVOCACY FOR
CONSTRUCTION WORKERS
STRUGGLING WITH SUBSTANCE USE
AND MENTAL HEALTH**

Christopher P. Rodman, MPH

Richard Rinehart, ScD

Cora Roelofs, ScD

Letitia Davis, ScD, EdM

Christine Trahan Cain, CIH

Methods

the unions' reactions to the opioid crisis and specific interventions, particularly peer advocacy. (see

Results

Explanation of Peer Advocacy

Key informants described peer advocacy as a very wide set of services, or a specific narrow set of

Peers are paid by the union or benefit fund and work for a "Member Assistance Program" or "Employee received some training and some have received certifications in providing peer support.

but that it is not the rule. What defines them as a "peer" is that they are a fellow union member in the said that peers are considered to be "first responders" or "first aid" for mental health and SUDs. Nearly all

Respondents reported that peers should be easily identifiable in the worksite and union hall. This can be

Explanation of who should be a peer

Interviewees identified that people who are in recovery are the most obvious choice to be a peer, but that

Barriers: Insurance

Several interviewees mentioned that insurance benefits and the way in which benefits are structured to work while being treated, an individual can lose health benefits. The example given was that there are enough to keep benefits administered by their multi-employer fund, including health care. These members

Barriers: Stigma





[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Recovery

by connecting members who have finished treatment to others in recovery. Peer advocacy programs

recovery and support on the job, in addition to training for the “first aid” model previously referenced. This

most programs. For these programs, peers are peer-workers first.

programs were described as needing flexibility and adaptability to help the programs navigate the

Conclusion

References

Relief Services in New York City. The New York State Office of Mental Health / Project Liberty; 2005.

Tracy K, Wallace SP. Benefits of peer support groups in the treatment of addiction. Substance Abuse

Appendix

A. Interview Instrument

How have your union and union benefits funds supported workers seeking to access treatment for
How have these benefit programs changed in recent years?

What have been the challenges of finding resources to support these programs and how have



In what ways does any union-sponsored managed care, benefits fund, comp management or

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Does your international have any return to work alternatives/modified duty programs? In place/



Is there a Pharmacy Benefit Management Program? In place/ in development/ none

Would you be willing to field a detailed survey to your locals, health funds, and/or training

B. List of Interviewees

Kevin Byrnes, Ironworkers International Chief of Staff and Jim Duffcy, Ironworker Locals 40, 361 & 417

