

# Introduction to Peer Recovery Mentors

## A New Perspective in non-traditional settings

ONesha Cochran My Story

COCHRAN, ONE...



INDIAN  
COUNTRY  
ECHO

### The Original Mentors

Alcoholics Anonymous – In 1935 a man Named Bill Wilson was admitted to the mental hospital because he had a problem with drinking. In the hospital he was influenced by a religious group that practiced surrender to a higher power, confession before fellow members, absolute honesty, and unselfish service to others. These new principals helped him remain clean and sober.

After his release from the hospital Bill met an alcoholic physician named Bob Smith. Bill shared his story of freedom from active addiction with Bob. Bob Smith became clean as well, and the two of them pooled together their knowledge of Alcohol and Healing and Alcoholics Anonymous was born.

And many moons before the AA literature was written Indigenous people were creating religious groups within their tribes to support against the disease of alcoholism. These spiritual circles were not documented in a westernized way however the medicine was not lost and it lives onto today in the WellBriety movement. It began with the Code of Handsome Lake and the Indian Shaker Church.

## MILLIONS OF PEOPLE ARE IN RECOVERY TODAY FROM THIS SIMPLE MODEL.

The power of one person in recovery helping and teaching another person how to stay clean is invaluable.

It works & if Dr. Bob and Bill the addict can write a book together why should we switch it up now.

Recovering Addicts in the clinic/hospital setting makes sense and it works too.

## The WellBriety Movement

The Red Road to WellBriety Movement is an awesome drive of Natives reclaiming and telling their own stories. You can order literature for your own clinics through [white bison website](#). To offer to your clients.

It can be helpful for traditional and non-traditional Natives to see themselves, their stories, their culture and their sacred ways in this literature that supports them to find recovery.

Many strong relationships flow from these rooms. Grown men are not afraid to cry here, little girls run around freely knowing they will be protected. Little boys are taught to drum, elders are respected and asked to lead

And when one of us crosses over it is felt deeply we support each other.

ALL ADDICTS DO NOT NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN A 12 STEP PROGRAM TO GET/STAY CLEAN, AND A PEER MENTOR CAN SUPPORT THEM TO FIND THEIR OWN PATH TO RECOVERY.

MANY DOCTORS AND CLINICIANS ARE WELL VERSED IN SOME OF THESE RESOURCES HOWEVER THESE SERVICES ARE CONSTANTLY CHANGING A PEER WILL KNOW THIS AND MAY EVEN HAVE DIRECT CONTACTS FOR THESE RESOURCES.

PEERS CAN NAVIGATE THROUGH SYSTEMS LIKE DHS, PROBATION, AND PAROLE AND HOMELESS SERVICES. FROM A PERSONAL LENS

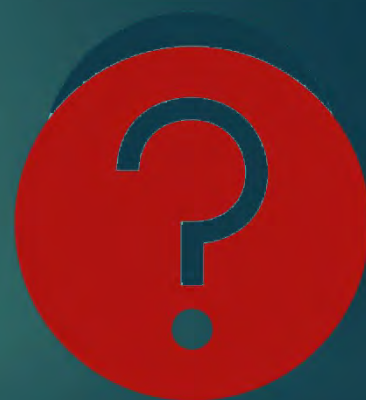
CLINICIANS ARE BUSY ALLOWING PEERS TO TAKE THE LEAD ON RELATIONSHIP BUILDING CAN BE FREEING.

A GOOD PEER MENTOR WILL SHOW THE PATIENT HOW TO RECEIVE CARE RESPECTFULLY. HOW TO ASK FOR WHAT THEY NEED AND BE KIND WHEN THEY DO IT.

## Why Peer Mentors are important in the hospital setting and beyond

### PEER MENTOR'S GENERATE TRUST AND SELF-DISCLOSURE & We can ask the hard

- It is easier to talk to someone who knows where you have been because they have been there themselves. You feel less shame.
- If a woman is pregnant for the first time, and is hating some thing about being a new mom, would she get advice from a single friend with no children? Maybe but the result may not be helpful. It's better to go to someone with children. Even if they don't have answers the kinship alone may be enough.
- Addicts have committed many questionable behaviors while in their active addiction, it can be hard to share these things with people who have never experienced such situations.
- If addicts don't feel safe enough to share they could go back to using, and eventually die.
- Secrets keep addicts sick



## PEER MENTORS KNOW THE SIGNS

- A Peer Mentor in the addiction field recognizes signs that other people may not see.
- They know when their clients are not being forthright.
- They know when their clients are in danger of a relapse
- They know when their clients have relapsed.
- They may recognize signs of abuse and sex trafficking
- They may realize patients are committing a crime in the moment.
- Peer Mentors can intervene sooner because they can pick up on things others can't

## PEER MENTORS CAN EDUCATE AND INSPIRE JUST BY TELLING THEIR STORY.

Meeting another person who was as insane as you were while in active addiction and seeing them living clean, productive lives is an amazing feeling I gives the struggling addict hope, "if they can do it I can too"



For hospital staff who may have never met a person in recovery it can be invaluable to be able to discuss with the peer what they needed when they were using. If the clinician can actually hear from a person with lived life experience they may have a better chance at understanding their patient.



Patients know they've made terrible decisions an interdisciplinary team can really make a difference.

A provider may say lets see what we can do to get you better.

A peer can say, "I lived a life others couldn't have survived. What I went through made me strong and now I can fight this fight AND walk with you through yours we can do this together. We can be better people because of what we went through." It doesn't have to break you.

## Peer categories certified through the Traditional Health Worker Registry OHA

- ▶ Peer Wellness Specialist
- ▶ Adult Addictions Peer Support Specialist
- ▶ Certified Recovery Mentors- 2+ years clean (MHAACBO REGISTRY)
- ▶ Adult Mental Health Peer Support Specialist
- ▶ Family Support Peer Support Specialist
- ▶ Youth and Young Adult Peer Support Specialist



# BARRIERS

Remember Peers are still in recovery could struggle with a potential relapse. This is why having a peer supervisor is very important.....

Peers may have criminal backgrounds and this could prevent them from ever working in a hospital/clinic environment unless you contract out

Different cultures can limit peers with a variety of patients so try to have a variety of peers. If you can only get two, get them on opposite ends of the spectrum.

There can be an us vs them mentality when peers integrate on a medical team. Having been in those shoes the only way around it is honesty and mutual respect.

Some professionals may doubt a peers right to work alongside them, but respect must be earned on both sides and it happens with time and through work done with integrity.