



# Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialists...

## Igniting Recovery

Volume 8 Issue 4

### Areas of Interest

- Forensic Peer Support
- Update on Peer Specialist trainings
- Learn about the important advocacy and work Wisconsin Voices for Recovery provides

## Forensic Peer Support...



The CMHS National GAINS Center for Justice-Involved Consumers reports on the effective of Forensic Peer Specialists.

The following is an excerpt from *“Peer Support within Criminal Justice Settings: The Role of Forensic Peer Specialists.”* By Larry Davidson, Ph.D. and Michael Rowe, Ph.D.

Forensic peer support involves trained peer specialists with histories of mental illness and criminal justice involvement helping those with similar histories. This type of support requires special attention to the needs of justice-involved people with mental illness, including an understanding of the impact of the culture of incarceration on behavior. Recognition of trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder, prevalent among this population, is critical.

Forensic Peer Specialists assist people through a variety of services and roles. Given the history of stigma and discrimination accruing to both mental illness and incarceration, perhaps the most important function of Forensic Peer Specialists is to instill hope and serve as valuable and credible models of the possibility of recovery. Other roles include helping individuals to engage in treatment and support services and to anticipate and address the psychological, social, and financial challenges of reentry. They also assist with maintaining adherence to conditions of supervision. Forensic Peer Specialists can serve as community guides, coaches, and/or advocates, working to link newly discharged people with housing, vocational and educational opportunities, and community services. Within this context, they can model useful skills and effective problem-solving strategies, and respond in a timely fashion to prevent or curtail relapses and other crises.

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# Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialists...

## Forensic Peer Support ... continued

Finally, Forensic Peer Specialists provide additional supports and services, including:

- Sharing their experiences as returning offenders and modeling the ways they advanced in recovery
- Supporting engagement in mental health and substance abuse treatment services in the community, including the use of psychiatric medications and attending 12-step and other abstinence-based mutual support groups
- Providing information on the rights and responsibilities of discharged offenders and on satisfying criminal justice system requirements and conditions (probation, parole, etc.)
- Helping people to negotiate and minimize continuing criminal sanctions as they make progress in recovery and meet criminal justice obligations.
- Working alongside professional staff
- Training professional staff on engaging consumers with criminal justice history

**How Forensic Peer Specialists Can Help Transform Mental Health Services and Linkages Between Systems:** Peer Specialists embody the potential for recovery for people who confront the dual stigmas associated with serious mental illnesses and criminal justice system involvement. Forensic peer specialists are able to provide critical aid to persons in the early stages of re-entry, in much the same way that peer specialists who support peers with mental illness alone (i.e., without criminal justice system involvement), have been able to engage into treatment persons with serious mental illnesses . Beyond the initial engagement phase, however, little is known empirically about the value Forensic Peer Specialists add to existing services. Nonetheless, in the limited number of settings in which they have been supported, case studies clearly suggest using Forensic Peer Specialists is a promising, cost effective practice.

The article also provides information on **Five Things Your Community Can Do to Integrate Forensic Peer Specialists in Services and Supports.**

There is also a section titled **Future Directions** that provided recommendations for building and sustaining the implementation and success of Forensic Peer Specialists.

*Wisconsin has incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals that are Certified Peer Specialists.*

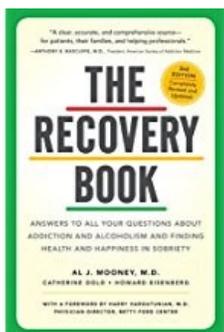
To read the full article please visit: <https://www.prainc.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/peer-support-criminal-justice-settings-role-forensic-peer-specialists.pdf>



*“Certified Peer Specialists work in a wide variety of areas in mental health and/or substance use disorder recovery “*



## Reading Resources...



### **The Recovery Book: Answers to All Your Questions About Addiction and Alcoholism and Finding Health and Happiness in Sobriety** by Al J. Mooney

M.D. (Author), Catherine Dold (Author), Howard Eisenberg (Author), Harry Haroutunian M.D. (Foreword)

A completely revised and updated second edition of The Recovery Book, the bible of addiction recovery. Written for the 23 million Americans struggling with alcohol and drugs, it is “a

clear, accurate, and comprehensive resource—for patients, their families, and helping professionals” (Anthony B. Radcliffe, M.D., former president, American Society of Addiction Medicine).

There is also a Quick Start Guide: <https://willingway.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-Recovery-Book-Quick-Start-Guides.pdf>

ISBN: 978-0-7611-7611-4

*This is a possible resource and is not a request for you to buy this book.*



## Wisconsin Peer Specialist Trainings...

In 2017 the new Wisconsin Peer Specialist Training Curriculum was implemented. The curriculum is based on The Core Competencies which can be found on [www.wicps.org](http://www.wicps.org) on the Certification page.

Trainings are being held regionally around the state and are contracted through the eight Independent Living Centers.

Trainings are now 48 instead of 40 hours. There is a state standardized application process. The first fifty applications for a training are accepted for review. If an application is accepted the person will be invited for an interview (usually by phone.) Eighteen people are selected to attend the training.

All training schedules are posted to: <http://www.wicps.org/training-schedules.html>

The Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist Employment initiative seeks to train and certify individuals to be employed in the field of mental health and/or substance use disorder recovery.

“Certified Peer Specialists are an integral part of a persons recovery team.”





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The newsletter is also available in other formats. If you would like to submit an article for consideration or recommended reading we would be happy to review it

**2018 Peer Specialist trainings and certification exams**

Certification Exam dates for 2018 have been posted. Additional training dates are expected to be posted in the near future. Please check the [www.wicps.org](http://www.wicps.org) website for updates on training and exam dates. For further information [alicep@accesstoind.org](mailto:alicep@accesstoind.org)

Thank you to the ILC's and UW-Milwaukee for their partnership in making the training & exam process a success!

## Wisconsin Voices for Recovery...

For almost 20 years, statewide and local Recovery Community Organizations (RCOs), representing people in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, their families, friends and allies, have formed around America to create a growing advocacy force and to support the creation of Recovery Support Services (RSS).

Under the guidance of Faces & Voices of Recovery, these RCOs have advocated for rights and resources for individuals in or seeking recovery and their family members. Over time, the stigma surrounding addiction and recovery has decreased and support for recovery has grown across the country, but more work still needs to be done!

Wisconsin Voices for Recovery is Wisconsin's only statewide recovery network currently supported by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Care and Treatment Services. Wisconsin also has many growing Recovery Community Organizations, businesses, and other non-profit groups that are working to celebrate the strengths and address the needs of their communities.

Visit: <http://wisconsinvoicesforrecovery.org/home/>

## Resources...

**Wisconsin Bureau of Prevention, Treatment and Recovery**

Phone: 608-266-2717

**Web:** [http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/mh\\_bcmh/index.htm](http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/mh_bcmh/index.htm)

**Wisconsin United for Mental Health**

**Web:** [www.wimentalhealth.org](http://www.wimentalhealth.org) Phone: 866-948-6483

**Mental Health America-Wisconsin**

**Web:** [www.mhawisconsin.org](http://www.mhawisconsin.org) Phone: (414) 276-3122 or (866) 948-6483 (toll free)

**Wisconsin Recovery Implementation Task Force**

**Web:** <https://ritf.wisconsin.gov/> Phone: 608-261-9046