

# 10 Questions about the Interactive Peer Support Toolkit

## 1. What is the Peer Support Toolkit?

It's an interactive PDF with information, practices, and tools to help treatment agencies effectively recruit, retain, and deploy people in recovery in a variety of peer support roles.

## 2. What does the toolkit cover?

The toolkit has four modules:

1. Preparing the Organizational Culture
2. Recruiting and Hiring Peer Staff
3. Service Delivery
4. Supervision and Retention

Apart from the four practice modules, there's also some great information on the value of integrating peer staff, a brief history of peer support, and more.

## 3. Who is it for?

We developed this toolkit with multiple organizations in mind. First, it offers guidance to treatment organizations that have just started to think about incorporating peer support services or are in the early stages of incorporating these services. These organizations will likely find all four of the modules useful.

Treatment organizations that want to expand their existing peer support services or deploy their peer staff more effectively will also benefit from this toolkit, particularly from Modules 3 and 4. We also encourage these organizations to review the information on preparing the organizational culture and recruiting and hiring in Modules 1 and 2, as there may be key elements that were missed during their initial implementation efforts, but which could have a tremendous positive impact on the delivery of peer support services if they are now incorporated.

## 4. Why should I look at this if we already use peers?

We think you'll find this toolkit useful, regardless of how long you have been providing peer support services. There are a variety of ideas discussed and resources included that can assist you in expanding your vision for peer support services in your community and enhancing your service delivery approach.

This toolkit promotes a "transformative" approach\* to peer support services and suggests ways to ensure your system or organization is using peer staff in ways that will bring the fullest benefit.

Module 3 may help with ensuring your peer staff are working effectively with others and to capacity, and Module 4 presents practices and tools to help with supervision and retention.

\*See Module 1, Practice 1 of the toolkit to learn about different approaches to incorporating peer services.

## **5. Okay, but 275 pages? Seriously?**

We admit we got carried away, but we're passionate about peer support services.

And we built the interactive toolkit to make it easy to navigate. For example, the practices and modules are independent, so you don't need to read the toolkit front to back like a typical book. Instead, use the interactive features to get to the content you want at the moment, and skip over the rest until you're ready to view it.

## **6. How should I get started using the toolkit?**

First, download the toolkit to your desktop or other device to ensure full use of the features. It's available at <http://dbhids.org/event/launch-of-philadelphias-interactive-peer-support-toolkit/>

Then, if you're adventurous, jump right in. You'll figure out how to navigate the PDF fairly quickly.

We invite our more methodical colleagues to read the first section, "How to Use This Toolkit," which is only one page long and has lots of graphics. You can also watch a brief tutorial on how to use the toolkit at <https://youtu.be/linLpwRvcMs>.

## **7. How do I know this advice is any good?**

The practices and tools in this toolkit come largely from organizations in Philadelphia that have worked for years to create a recovery-oriented system of care in which peer support services are central. Many of the recommendations are also informed by the literature on peer support services. Many of the tools have also been developed and field-tested by organizations across the country.

But every organization is different, and the practices and tools may work best for your organization with some customization.

## **8. Can I just read the text without filling out the tools?**

Sure. However, we don't recommend using the tools without reading the accompanying text. The text will provide you with important contextual information that will help you to maximize the benefit of each tool.

## **9. Can I print out modules or tools?**

Yes. Use your printer options to print out only a particular page or a range of pages. If you fill out the tools in the PDF, your responses will also be printed. To print only certain pages, key in the range of pages or individual page numbers you'd like to print. The page number for the cover is "i."

## **10. What if I disagree with something I read in the toolkit?**

We hope the information, tools, and practices in this toolkit inspire plenty of open and robust discussion at all levels of your organization and system. The patient and respectful exploration of different opinions is critical to eventually garnering widespread support for the design and integration of peer support services. We hope that you find that this toolkit promotes your efforts in that regard.

Have ideas about the interactive Peer Support Toolkit that would benefit others outside your organization? Share them on Twitter with #peersTK.