

Bell, J. S., Hagaman, A., Beattey, J., Fears, G., White, W. L., & Watson, D. P. (2025). Advancing peer support workforce research: Insights and recommendations through the lens of professionalization. *Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment*, 170, 209612. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.josat.2024.209612>

Abstract

Over the past two decades, peer support providers have increasingly formalized their roles in the addiction treatment workforce through credentialing and professionalization efforts. Despite these advancements, misconceptions regarding their professional identity persist and contribute to challenges such as burnout and high turnover. This commentary underscores the importance of viewing the peer workforce as an emerging profession using a lens that has previously been applied to other healthcare service roles. We outline key milestones in the peer workforce's professional development and ongoing labor advocacy efforts by state and national organizations. We call for a comprehensive research agenda that addresses workforce outcomes, workplace dynamics, and role competencies. Such efforts are crucial for advancing the recognition and support of peers as an integral component of the behavioral healthcare workforce.