

RECOVERY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS ON HOW TO EFFECTIVELY
TRANSFORM SUBSTANCE USE IN THE WORKPLACE IN
SUPPORT OF EMPLOYEES AND THEIR BOTTOM LINE



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TABLE OF CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION

The Addiction Epidemic and Employer Impact	03
Employers' Role in Prevention, Treatment and Recovery in the Workplace	04
Finding Solutions: RBA's Programs & Services	05
Assessing Your Workplace Needs & Developing a Plan	06
Developing Best Practices to Maintain a Recovery Responsive Workplace	08
Developing Recovery Responsive Workplace Policies	09
Training Staff on Recovery Responsive Programming	11
Creating a Recovery Responsive Workplace & Recovery Inclusive Culture	13
Utilizing Recovery Employment Coaches to Support, Retain and Hire People in Recovery	15

INTRODUCTION



The Addiction Epidemic - A Serious Workforce Issue

According to the Center for Disease Control, health care providers across the US wrote more than 191 million prescriptions for opioid pain medication in 2017—a rate of 58.7 prescriptions per 100 people. In the same year, more than 11 million people misused prescription opioids.

More research has shown a critical link between rising opioid prescriptions and declining workforce participation rates, estimating that 'nearly half of men age 25 to 54 who are not in the workforce take pain medication daily and a higher rate of absenteeism among opioid abusers who work'.

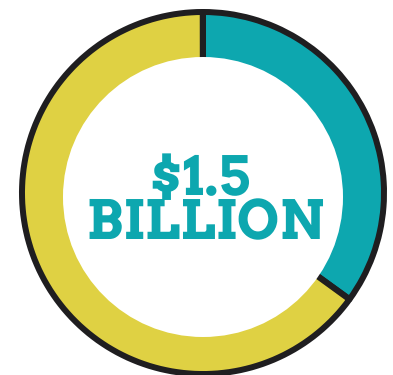
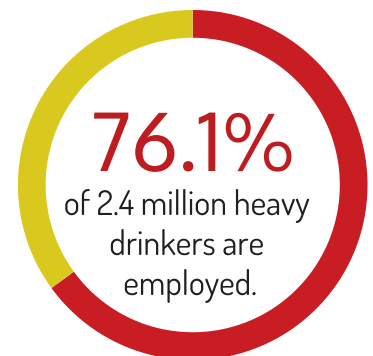
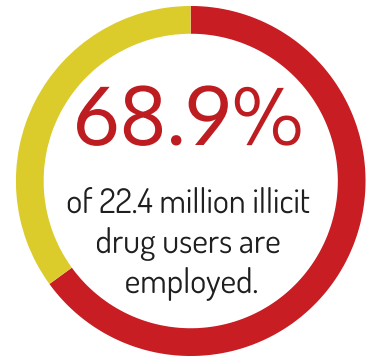
The high level of substance misuse across the nation has shown to be a contributing factor in low workforce participation rates amongst young people and women, too. As a result, the addiction epidemic has been deemed to be not only a 'serious public health issue, but a serious workforce issue – one that employers must address to meet the challenges of finding and retaining quality workers'.

The Devastating Impact on Employers

In addition to absenteeism, substance misuse has proven to impact employers in a variety of ways:

- Increased tardiness;
- Increased disciplinary actions;
- Increased employee turn-over;
- Increased healthcare costs;
- Higher safety concerns, accidents and legal liability;
- Decreased morale and productivity; and
- Frustrated managers and co-workers.

The CDC estimates the total economic burden of prescription opioid misuse in the US is \$78.5 billion a year, including the costs of health care, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal justice involvement. It has been estimated that \$1.5 Billion of this cost is incurred by businesses in the form of impaired productivity and absenteeism.



is the estimated cost incurred by businesses in the form of impaired productivity and absenteeism due to prescription opioid misuse.

EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITY



According to the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), employers are responsible for understanding the nature of their workforce, the major problems and stressors that are affecting their employees, and the possible ways in which alcohol, prescription drugs, and other drug misuse may be causing or contributing to some of those problems. Armed with this understanding, employers are far more equipped to develop effective recovery responsive policies and programs that can meet the needs of their unique workplace while positively impacting their bottom line.

Your Bottom Line

Across the United States, new strategies are being implemented to involve the business community in combating this epidemic. For example, the Kentucky Chamber's Workforce Center developed the Opioid Response Program for Business in 2020 to be led by a task force of business and industry representatives. The goal of this task force is to work directly with employers to help audit their policies and recommend best practices to maintain a recovery responsive workplace and culture. The program is the first of its kind in the nation, but other workforce boards are partnering up with their local business communities to create and implement similar models. The goal is to combat not only the impact of opioid misuse on individuals and families and the criminal justice system, but to build and sustain a quality workforce in order to significantly improve their economies and employer's bottom line.

"As business leaders, we cannot sit idle in the face of this epidemic. We must be an active part of the solution to recover our citizens and our workforce."

-Jonathan Copley,
CEO of Aetna
Better Health of Kentucky

How Recovery Business Association Can Help

The programs and services provided by Recovery Business Association (RBA) are aligned with these new strategies and aim to:

- meet the challenges of finding, training and retaining workers amidst the nation's addiction crisis;
- work directly with employers to audit their policies and recommend best practices to maintain a recovery responsive workplace and culture;
- destigmatize the addiction epidemic and support employers' role in substance prevention, treatment and recovery in the workplace;
- stress treatment over punishment for substance users;
- create local collaboratives with community and business leaders to develop solutions; and
- support efforts to retain and hire people in recovery.

RBA's programs have proven to increase employment retention, increase productivity and employee morale, reduce health care costs and increase community engagement.

FINDING SOLUTIONS THROUGH RBA

Our Mission

Recovery Business Association is a Recovery Community organization based in Wisconsin and our mission is to create Recovery Responsive business organizations in support of employers, employees and economies across the nation. We offer an annual membership and dues are based on the number of full-time equivalent employees. Our services can also be provided on a stand-alone basis and are always customized to fit the unique needs of your workplace.

RBA'S ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES:

WELCOME PACKET

Includes organizational screening and assessment, RBA Toolkit for executives, managers, HR Staff and supervisors, use of the RBA name and logo and more.

HEIGHTENED NATIONAL AUDIENCE/PROFILE

Prominent partner listing on RBA's website.

MONTHLY RBA MEMBER VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Third Thursday of each month at 3:00 pm EST
Connect & discuss pressing issues with RBA members

Related updates provided monthly

Special topics presented by RBA staff, members and leading professionals

MEMBERS-ONLY RBA E-NEWSLETTER

E-newsletter with new member updates, resources, trainings, and special offers

PRIVATE RBA MEMBER FACEBOOK GROUP

RBA Members-only private Facebook support group for executives, human resource staff and supervisors

RECOVERY RESPONSIVE WORKPLACE DATA PLATFORM – COMING IN 2021!

Includes access to powerful tools to track and report on recovery outcomes so you can tell the recovery responsive success of your workplace through data

ANNUAL SUMMIT FOR MEMBERS – COMING IN 2021!

RBA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES:

- 1-24 FTE Employees: \$500
- 25-50 FTE Employees: \$750
- 51-100 FTE Employees: \$1,200
- More than 100 FTE Employees: \$1,500
- 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organization's price is based on the organization's annual budget

RBA PREMIER MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

We also offer three premier membership levels. These levels receive additional benefits, including: priority listing in our business directory, logo placement on our site, Annual Human Resource review and revisions, complimentary exhibition booth at the annual REA Summit, sponsorship of events, special programs, and more. Premier Membership opportunities range from \$2,500 per year to \$10,000 per year.

All membership levels and suggested pricing are donations and tax deductible.



Assessing Your Workplace Needs

Conducting a needs assessment helps you learn what types of substance misuse problems your organization is facing and discover ways to overcome them. Each workplace has its own challenges related to health and wellness.

According to SAMHSA, when addressing your workplace needs you should consider asking these questions:

- Is your organization experiencing a high rate of absenteeism and tardiness?
- Is your organization employing individuals in safety- and security-sensitive industries?
- What are the gaps in your policies and procedures that would prevent employees from getting the help they need?
- Does your organization conduct federally funded projects?
- Is your organization in the transportation sector, with mandated drug-testing requirements under regulations from the Department of Transportation?
- Does your organization have a high prevalence of substance use problems?
- Does your organization employ a population of workers for whom prevention education is critical?

A recovery responsive workplace policy and program are required for organizations with federally funded projects. At a minimum, a written policy, supervisor training and employee education must be in place. If your organization is in a sector with mandated drug-testing requirements your policy and program must follow the requirements for testing.

The Assessment Process

SAMHSA also recommends when doing a needs assessment, you should consider involving all major sectors of your workforce. No one person will understand what is happening throughout the workplace, so including all team members is important. You'll want to make sure the members of the recovery responsive workplace team are representative of all of your employees to reflect their racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

Employees will be more likely to cooperate in your new policy and programs if they are brought into the process early. Many businesses have found that cooperation, collaboration, and shared responsibility are critical to developing and implementing a successful recovery responsive workplace policy and program.

Developing Your Plan of Action

If you suspect that significant alcohol, prescription drug, or other substance use issues are costing your organization money in lost productivity, absenteeism, and/or damaged goods, now is the time to bring in an outside expert.

Recovery Business Association can help you design a formal study tailored to the particular circumstances and needs of your workplace. Taking enough time to understand the situation thoroughly will help you target your efforts and resources where you need them most.

By concentrating on a set of goals that are broader than just "the reduction or elimination of drug misuse in the workplace," you will get more cooperation for actions that must take place to transform your workplace and improve your bottom line.



HOW RBA CAN HELP

RBA utilizes both quantitative and qualitative techniques to help you gain a fuller understanding of how substance misuse might be impacting your workplace. We gather this information at the very beginning of your recovery responsive workplace planning process to help you identify the issues relevant to you and your employees. We use this information to help you develop and implement a customized plan of action.

Our quantitative approaches generally rely on survey questionnaires, administrative data, and statistical analyses while our qualitative approaches use observations, in-depth interviews, and focus groups to identify and contextualize the situation within your organization. Once this information is obtained and organized, RBA will develop a formal plan to help you move in your desired direction.



Developing Best Practices to Maintain a Recovery Responsive Workplace

Beyond lower absenteeism, increased productivity, reduced workers' compensation filings and fewer accidents, the benefits from implementing a recovery responsive workplace program also include other savings, such as improved employee creativity and emotional stability. Reports have shown that while minor, these changes can enhance your organization's bottom line.

SAMHSA has identified four ways to better enforce your newly established recovery responsive workplace programs:

- 1. Develop a Written Policy:** To create a recovery responsive workplace, you must first develop a policy that outlines which behaviors are acceptable, which are unacceptable, and how you will support employees engaging in unacceptable behaviors to ensure your workplace is safe and employees are inspired and empowered.
- 2. Educate Employees:** You must take the time to educate employees so they understand the policy and feel empowered to make good choices. By explaining to employees why the new policy is necessary and the risks of substance use in the workplace, you give your employees the understanding they need to support and follow through. Education through hands-on training is the way to go.
- 3. Build a Culture of Support:** If you have employees who have struggled with substance misuse in the past (or who have a family history of substance misuse), try to rally these individuals to create a supportive community within your organization. When employees can connect with one another during times of struggle, they're much less likely to feel isolated and desperate.
- 4. Utilize EAP's and Peer Support:** If you truly want your workplace to be substance free, you can't spend all of your time reprimanding employees who are struggling. This will only make those employees feel ashamed and possibly even spiteful. Once considered a 'moral' problem, addiction is now deemed a complex *disease* of the brain and body by most medical associations, including the American Medical Association and the American Society of Medicine. This means addiction isn't a choice, so you'll want to provide assistance programs to employees in need of them. At a minimum, have resources on hand that you can give to employees to connect them with community-based organizations, treatment centers, peer support specialists, helplines, and/or counselors. Not only does this give employees options to pursue, but it also shows you care.



Developing a Recovery Responsive Workforce Policy

According to SAMHSA, creating a written policy that reflects the needs of your workplace and applicable laws is key to establishing a successful recovery responsive workforce and culture.

After assessing your workplace's needs, you will want to develop a policy that is customized to your organization.

5 Reasons Why You Need a Written Policy:

1. A written policy is often required by law or by insurance carriers;
2. A written policy makes legal review possible;
3. A written policy provides a record of an organization's efforts and a reference if the policy is challenged. It might protect the employer from certain kinds of claims by employees;
4. A written policy is easier to explain to employees, supervisors, and others; and
5. A written policy makes the information easier and clearer for employees to understand and commit to.

When developing a policy, consider the following:

- Legal requirements such substance-free workplace laws and regulations that may apply;
- Characteristics of your workplace and employees;
- The values and priorities of your organization;
- Basic elements of an effective policy;
- Developing a statement of purpose for your policy; and
- Strategizing your implementation approach.

Key elements of an effective policy should include:

- Goals
- Definitions, Expectations, and Prohibitions
- Dissemination Strategies
- Benefits and Assurances
- Consequences and Appeals
- Policy Approaches

Policy approaches can range from meeting the minimum requirements mandated by law to broader policies that address other issues that might be related to drug use, such as employee absenteeism.

Identifying Your Policy Purpose and Goals

Statement of Purpose

According to SAMHSA, a statement of purpose should contain your goals for the workplace policy, the organization's definition of "substance use," and a description of how the policy was developed. For example, was it developed in meetings with union representatives or employees representing different and diverse sections of the workforce? Or in collaboration with the organization's legal counsel? Some organizations may want the policy to have a very narrow goal, such as meeting the minimum requirements of a law. Other organizations may prefer broader goals.

What are your goals?

To help you develop your statement of purpose, you will want to first identify the goals of your policy. What is it that you want to accomplish through this policy, *specifically*?

To define policy goals, consider the following:

- What are the substance-free workplace laws and regulations (federal, state, or local) with which your organization must comply, if applicable?
- What other goals does your organization expect to achieve? For example, does your organization hope to reduce or eliminate substance workplace accidents, illnesses, and absenteeism?
- Does your organization want to address the issue of preventing and treating workplace drug use and misuse in the context of accomplishing a broader goal?
- Do you want to promote employee wellness and safety?



HOW RBA CAN HELP

After assessing your workplace's needs, RBA will sit down with your team to help you identify the purpose, goals, benefits, assurances, and definitions of your workforce policy, as well as the laws and regulations your organization is subject to. Following this, RBA will assist you in developing a customized implementation strategy so you can effectively communicate your new policy to your diverse teams and then put this policy into action. Our policy services include: support to write your official statement of purpose and policy, employee policy training, and more.

Training Staff on Recovery Responsive Programming

Once your recovery responsive workforce policy is established and written, you'll want to ensure each of your key team members are not only trained on the new policy, but that they understand how to support employees experiencing substance misuse issues, as well as their unique roles in enforcing the policy while simultaneously maintaining a positive workforce culture.

Understanding the Roles of Your Team:

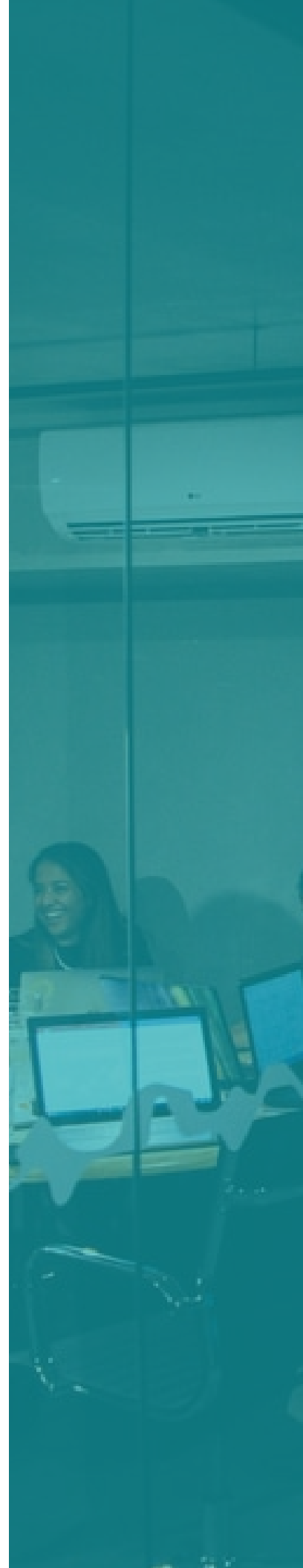
- **Employer's Role:** The employer is key to the success of the new workplace policy, as well as the strategies and programs that support that policy. Workplace leaders must show support and set the right tone for these efforts. Employees need to understand the rationale for the policy and program in ways that are practical, personally meaningful, and relevant to their job responsibilities.
- **Human Resources' Role:** HR staff have a responsibility to protect the safety and privacy of employees. They are also responsible for communicating the policy and program to new hires and current employees in the right ways at the right times.
- **Supervisors' Role:** Supervisors have numerous responsibilities that are critical to the success of your new workplace policy and program. They are often the first to notice and to be informed of a possible problem, and they must be fair and consistent in enacting the policy.

Implementing Employee Education

According to SAMHSA, substance use education and prevention are ongoing processes. Many employees do not seek help for their addiction problems because they are worried that these problems may be negatively viewed or they will be fired. Employees will be more willing to seek the help they need when there is a recovery responsive policy in place and they have an understanding that employers care for their overall health and well-being.

You'll want to communicate the value your organization places on your employee's personal health, as well as the health of their families and communities. An employee education program should clearly communicate the hazards related to using substances and the benefits of avoiding it. When designing education materials and trainings, you should consider addressing the concerns of employees who are:

- Interested in a range of health promotion and wellness issues—such as stress management, pain management, nutrition and disease prevention;
- Concerned family members who want to learn how to effectively communicate with other family members about substance misuse;
- Concerned about their own or their friends' substance misuse;
- Interested in being part of community-based prevention activities;
- Interested in confidential, one-on-one education on addiction and related behavioral health issues; and
- Interested in learning more about providing education and training for staff.





HOW RBA CAN HELP

RBA provides a variety of trainings that are specific to your management teams, Human Resource staff and employees.

The goals of these trainings are to ensure that each department understands their roles and how to implement the policy in a way that supports employee's overall health and well-being, reduces absenteeism and tardiness, enhances employee morale and creativity, and ultimately, increases your bottom line.

RBA's employer trainings provide information on:

- how to appropriately address, handle and care for employees experiencing addiction problems and other behavioral health issues;
- how to review the workplace's policy, program, and rules with new hires and existing employees;
- how to discuss how employees and their families can get help;
- how to address employee performance issues due to substance misuse;
- how to explain and implement employee protections that are included in the policy;
- information about substance misuse and their effects on performance; and
- prevention education efforts and resources available to employees in your area.

RBA provides additional training for employees so they can understand the new policy, how the company plans to implement the policy and the type of support available to them through the organization should they begin to experience addiction and/or other behavioral health issues.



Creating a Recovery Responsive Workplace

According to SAMHSA, destigmatizing addiction is the first step in creating a workplace culture that is supportive of those affected by drug and alcohol addiction and co-occurring mental health conditions and disorders.

5 Steps to Destigmatizing Addiction in the Workplace:

1. The first way to destigmatize addiction and recovery in the workplace is to ensure management teams are trained in a way that allows employees to seek support without fear of retribution. Employers must adhere to all laws governing confidentiality and must always respect the privacy of the individuals in need of treatment. Only by making this kind of commitment to supporting their overall health can employers change the trajectory of costs associated with addiction in the workplace.
2. The second step is for employers to adequately and equitably prioritize tackling substance use challenges in the workplace by demonstrating support for comprehensive programs that include critical employee education, screening, treatment referral and follow up care.
3. Thirdly, employers must create an environment where employees feel motivated and empowered to seek help to address their substance misuse challenges. To do this, they must take actions that reduce stigma and eliminate the perceived penalty and blame associated with having an open discussion about substance misuse issues, and with participation in workplace treatment programs.
4. The fourth step is for employers and their human resources teams to ensure that benefits are designed to reflect a clear and generous commitment to providing high-quality options for treatment through employer-based mental health and substance use care. Employers should strive to offer benefits and services for employees and their family members with substance use disorders and to reduce financial and fear-based barriers to accessing appropriate care.
5. And lastly, it's highly recommended that employers engage directly with employees, managers, families and other community stakeholders to secure buy-in for creating a recovery responsive workplace and that they continuously seek feedback to improve services and support for addiction-related issues.



Provide access to support without fear of retribution



Demonstrate support for comprehensive programs



Create an environment where employees feel motivated and empowered to seek help.



Design and offer benefits that provide high-quality treatment options.



Engage with employees, managers, families and community stakeholders

Creating a Recovery Inclusive Workplace Culture

After you've completed your organizational assessment, developed and implemented new recovery policies and programs, worked to destigmatize addiction in the workplace, you can begin to create a recovery *inclusive* culture for your employees.

Since the recovery community is diverse, and because addiction doesn't discriminate based on job title or status, it's highly likely that one of your employees has experienced addiction and recovery and thus has a valuable story to share. We recommend having your leaders set an example from the top-down by sharing about their own experiences with substance misuse. If you have a leader who's in long-term recovery and is willing to tell their story, this will set a strong example and empower others to feel comfortable sharing, too, which, in turn, create a culture of support throughout your entire company.

Recovery is a transformative process and as a result people in recovery often bring a wealth of skills, talents and insight to the workplace that has the potential to benefit your company culture for the better. Being a supportive of the recovery community and movement will not only ensure that those struggling are offered understanding and support, but will empower those living in long-term recovery to be able to offer their talents and skills at work without the fear of shame or stigma.

Diversity in the workplace is one of the greatest assets of a good company, and bringing in people with recovery experiences is no different. In fact, research has shown that people in recovery are often very motivated to work because employment allows for them to get their lives back. Plus, since most people in recovery take an abstinence-based approach, these individuals typically don't party, which means no hangovers. This has proven greater productivity at work and fewer "sick" days spent dealing with a hangover or other substance use related problems.



HOW RBA CAN HELP

As professionals in recovery, Recovery Business Association's team members can set the tone for your organization to create a recovery inclusive culture by providing trainings that are built on sharing our personal struggles with addiction in life and in the workplace. Our trainings include opportunities for your employees to provide feedback on the type of support they'd like to see from management teams, as well as share their personal experiences, receive encouragement and support, and more.



Utilizing EAPs and Peer Recovery Coaches to Support, Retain and Hire Staff

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

An EAP offers services like counseling, referrals to health professionals, and other resources for employees within the organization. The program will often address issues with mental health, including substance misuse. They can also assist an employee with other difficulties, such as financial issues and legal problems. An EAP is intended to encourage employees to reach out for help.

Employers who provide EAPs encompass them into an overall wellness program that can offer benefits to workers who are struggling with behavioral health issues. An EAP provides the employee with a safe and confidential environment to discuss their issues regarding addiction.

Peer Recovery Coaches

A new and effective option for employee's struggling with addiction are Peer Recovery Coaches. Peer Recovery Coaches are trained professionals in the behavioral health field who have personal experience with addiction and recovery.

SAMHSA states that a peer specialist (also known as a certified peer specialist, peer support specialist, recovery employment coach, etc.) is a person who uses his or her lived experience of recovery from mental illness and/or addiction, plus skills learned in formal training, to deliver services to promote mind-body recovery and resiliency.

Studies have found that peer support significantly improves recovery outcomes including decreased morbidity and mortality, reduced use of emergency services, improved self-reported health status, and self-care skills, and improved quality of life.

Because of this, peer support is now the fastest growing service for people in recovery and employers are utilizing the power of peer recovery services to support and retain their staff and hire people in recovery.



Recovery Employment Coaches

There is substantial evidence showing that Peer Recovery Coaches or Peer Employment Coaches can provide vocational mentorship pre-and-post employment by offering supportive services to instill hope, enhance self-esteem and overall life skills while promoting wellness for work.

Recovery Employment Coaches provide staff with the support they need to navigate addiction and work-related issues, access treatment and other local resources, and support to ensure recovery and success in the workplace.

Recovery Employment Coaches provide:

- **Emotional support** - Every coaching session starts from a place of empathy and understanding. The purpose of a coach is to provide a supportive, non-judgement and neutral sounding board, help employees to find balance, and empower them to build emotional resilience.
- **Stress management** - As individuals in recovery who have been there and understand, recovery coaches know first-hand the stress associated with addiction and resulting behavioral health issues. They can help employees build and practice valuable life skills that result in positive changes in their work creativity and productivity.
- **Goal setting and actionable accountability** - Coaches work collaboratively with employees to help them form clear, actionable goals and plans to move their life and work in a positive direction.



RBA has qualified Recovery Employment Coaches available to interact directly with employers and employees. Our coaches are trained on how to access and refer employees to local recovery support resources and to provide evidence-based peer support when it is needed most.

Our coaches are a reliable resource for when employees need to process challenges in the workplace and need to speak about their problems with key staff. Coaches can be accessed by management teams, HR staff and employees via email, phone, video conference and in-person.

