



Recent Study Reveals Critical Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction Among Mental Health Peer Support Workers

For more information: Edwards, J. P., & Solomon, P. L. (2023). [Explaining job satisfaction among mental health peer support workers](#). *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 46(3), 223–231.

A recent national study sheds light on the challenges and opportunities experienced by Peer Support Workers (PSWs). The research, conducted through a comprehensive online survey, delves into the evolving practice of peer support work revealing key factors that significantly impact job satisfaction among these essential contributors to mental health and recovery support services.

Historical Evolution and Contemporary Significance

The practice of peer support traces its roots back to the late 18th century, evolving from voluntary exchanges of support between individuals facing similar challenges into a distinct discipline within mental health service provision. Today, PSWs leverage their lived expertise of recovery from mental health and substance use related challenges, coupled with formal training, to offer essential support in a diverse range of behavioral health settings.

Addressing Compensation Disparities and Emotional Labor

Despite the vital role PSWs play, the study highlights persistent challenges, including low compensation, marginalization, and the unique emotional labor inherent in peer support work. As the demand for behavioral health workers grows, the need to understand and improve job satisfaction factors for PSWs becomes increasingly urgent.

Key Findings and Associations

Results identified coworker support, perceived organizational support, job empowerment, and supervisor support as critical factors influencing overall job satisfaction among PSWs. Notably, findings revealed that perceived organizational support is the most influential factor, explaining the

highest variance in overall job satisfaction, general job satisfaction, pay satisfaction, and advancement and security satisfaction.

Necessity for Equitable Compensation and Recognition

The study emphasizes the importance of addressing factors such as coworker support, perceived organizational support, and feelings of empowerment to enhance job satisfaction among PSWs. It underscores the need for equitable compensation, particularly for older PSWs who bring valuable perspectives and extensive experiential knowledge to their roles. Findings further suggest understanding and improving these work environment elements are crucial for continued inclusion and sustainability of PSWs in mental health services.

"As the demand for mental health services continues to grow, recognizing and addressing the needs of Peer Support Workers becomes imperative. This study offers valuable insights that can guide policies and practices to create a supportive and sustainable environment for these essential contributors." (Edwards & Solomon, 2024)

About the Study

The study was conducted through a national online survey, recruiting 645 respondents from the Academy of Peer Services (APS) and National Association of Peer Supporters (N.A.P.S.) listservs. The research aimed to identify and understand the factors influencing job satisfaction among PSWs, critical players in the mental health support ecosystem.

CONTACT

Name	Contact Information
Dr. Jonathan P. Edwards	jpe2125@columbia.edu

Summary by Edwards, J. P., Solomon, P. & Spagnolo, A. (Mar 14, 2024).