Toolkit for Hiring Peers

SMIAdviser
A Clinical Support System for Serious Mental Illness

NASMHPD

Building New Horizons

OPENING CAREER PATHWAYS FOR PEERS
WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE BACKGROUNDS

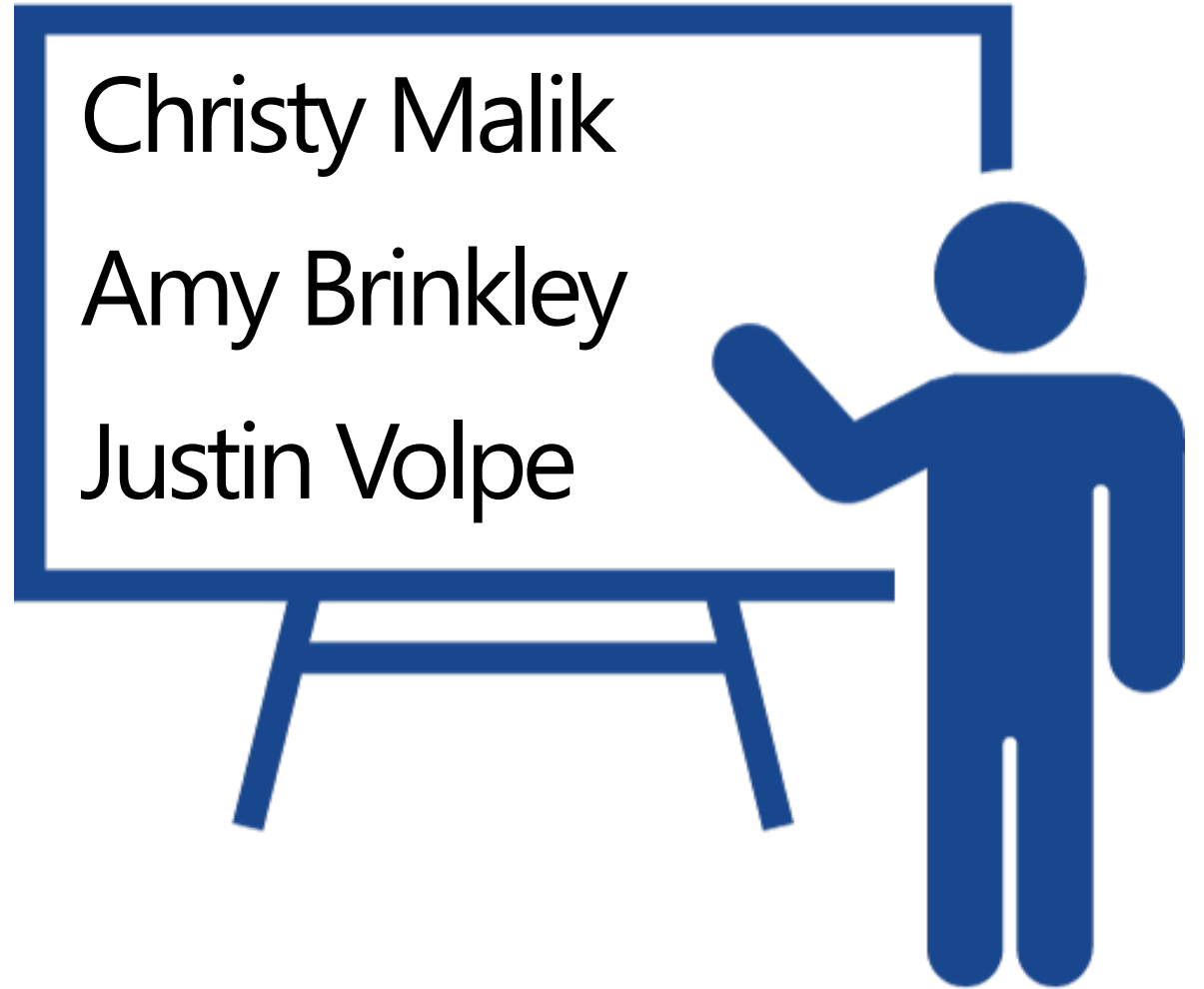JULY 2023

Presenters

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What is Peer Support?

Peer Support Workers

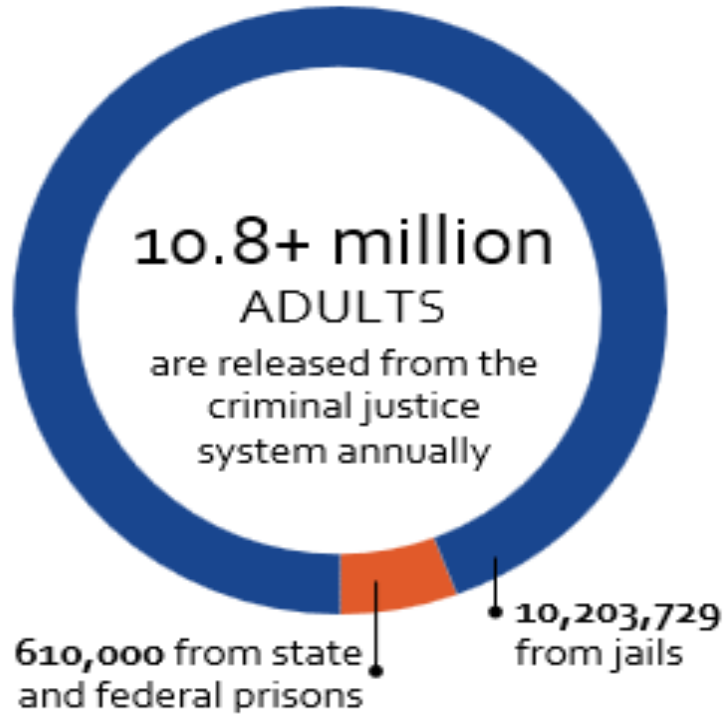People who apply their lived experience with SMI and/or SUD to help others experiencing similar circumstances

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Audience Polling Question

What is your greatest barrier to hiring peer support workers with a criminal background?

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Lens of peer's career journey:

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Why develop this resource?

10.8+ million ADULTS are released from the criminal justice system annually

610,000 from state and federal prisons

10,203,729 from jails

1+ million PEER SUPPORT WORKERS are needed

60-75% UNEMPLOYMENT post-incarceration

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Covers All Phases of Hiring

3 Modules

PRE-HIRING — Overview of federal, state, and local initiatives; peer certification policies; Medicaid funding considerations; and strategies for the recruitment process

HIRING — Tips for reviewing applications, conducting interviews, and onboarding a new peer support worker

POST-HIRING — Best practices regarding integration into the organization, supervision, professional development, and retention

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Pre-Hiring Module

PRE-HIRING

- **Hiring Policies:** Federal, State and Local Initiatives
  - WOTC, FBP, Title VII of Civil Rights Act 1964 (EEOC and *Green* Factors), Fair Chance to Compete for Jobs Act 2019, FCRA, and State initiatives (i.e., Second Chance, Clean Slate, and Ban-the-Box)

- **Peer Certification Regulations:** Criminal Background Checks
  - SAMHSA's National Model Standards for Peer Support Certification

- **Funding Considerations:** Medicaid Funding and Beyond

- **Recruitment Process**
  - Communicate to potential applicants that lived experience of criminal justice involvement will be a value-added skillset

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Hiring Module

HIRING

- **Reviewing applications:** Assess individually, review on a case-by-case basis, and involve current peer support workers in process

- **Interviewing candidates:** Utilize skill-based interviewing techniques, use a whole-person approach, and be transparent

- **Onboarding process:** Background check procedures should be consistent and fair for all applicants. Consider the 3 *Green* factors:
  - The nature and gravity of the offense or conduct
  - The time that has passed since the offense, conduct and/ or completion of the sentence
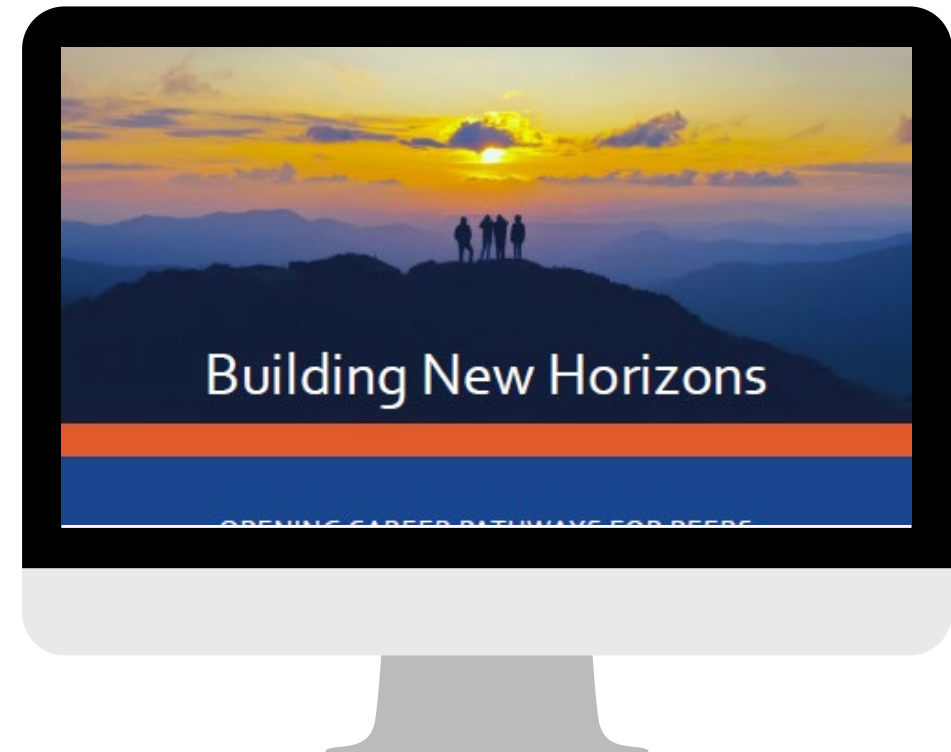 - The nature of the job held or sought

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Post-Hiring Module

POST-HIRING

- **Integration**: Demonstrate respect for their boundaries.
    - US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission - Job Applicants and the ADA

- **Supervision**: Practice self-awareness and reflection to provide effective recovery-oriented supervision.
    - SAMHSA's BRSS TACS - Supervisor of Peer Workers Self Assessment

- **Retention:** Make workplaces engines for mental health and well-being.
    - US Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being

- **Professional Development**: Create and allow for training and ongoing educational opportunities for peer support specialists.
    - SMI Adviser's Windows of Wisdom Videos

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Access the Toolkit & Request Consultation

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Questions?

Contact Us

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