

The Peer's Role in Patient Recovery – Quick Reference

The Power of Lived Experience



You bring something no medication can: proof that recovery is possible

- **Your role:** build trust by validating feelings, normalizing struggle, reducing stigma
- Because you're "on their side," patients are more likely to be honest with you

Bridging the Gap

Clinical team → physiological stabilization (withdrawal, airway, etc.)

You → engagement and advocacy

Help patients understand medical terms; help the clinical team understand patient barriers (housing instability, fear of law enforcement, etc.)



Not there to diagnose or prescribe — there to help the patient feel safe enough to accept treatment

Improving Outcomes

Patients engaged by a peer are more likely to remain connected to treatment and community support after their ED visit (Bassuk et al., 2016)



Your job: turn a short-term ED visit into a long-term recovery plan