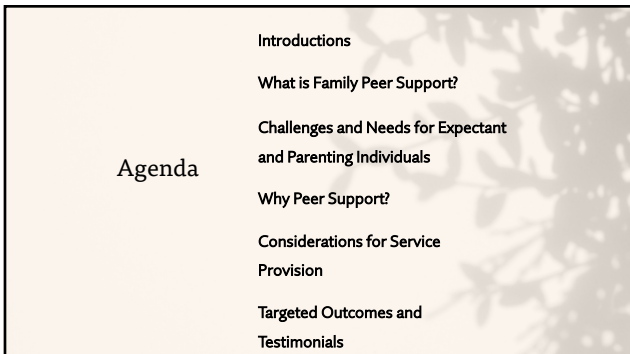
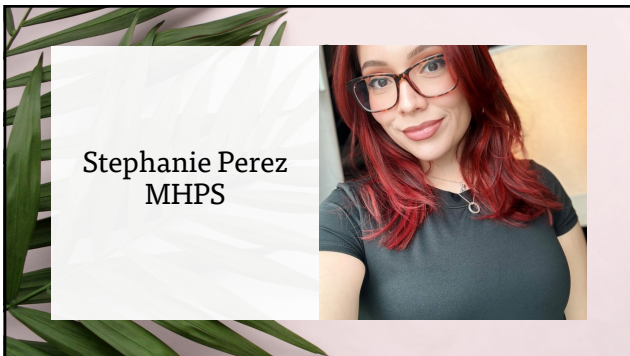


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Chelsea Biggerstaff
RSPS, PSS

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LifeWorks Austin

LifeWorks is a fearless advocate for youth and young adults pursuing a life they love and a stable future for themselves and their families.

LifeWorks provides services for youth and their families seeking housing, counseling, education and workforce programs.

5

Community-Based Peer Support

A team of Peer Specialists (Traditional and Family) who work with youth, ages 16 to 26, who are referred by another LifeWorks program and would like support creating, maintaining, and/or enriching their own recovery journey.

Peer Specialists meet with individuals either in one of our offices or in a mutually agreeable location in the community. E.g. Their home, coffee shops, etc.

6



Peer Support and Peer Support Specialists

Peer Support
The act of who have similar lived experience giving each other encouragement, hope, assistance, guidance, and understanding that aids in healing and/or recovery.

Peer Support Specialists
Peer Support Specialists are trained and certified professionals who use their personal journey with mental health and/or substance use challenges to provide support for to others who may experiencing similar difficulties.
They support others in identifying their own goals and developing a plan of action to achieve those goals. They support individuals in creating strategies for self care, developing coping skills, and taking concrete steps towards building fulfilling, self-determined lives.

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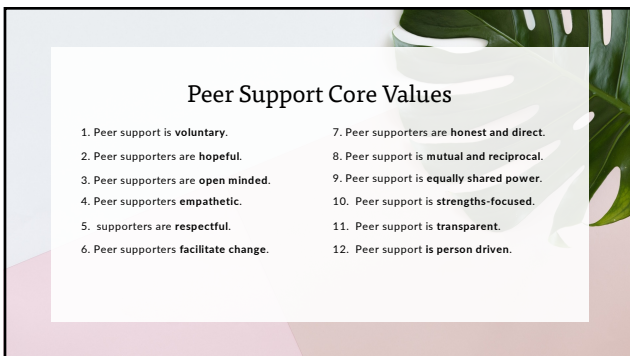


Family Peer Support

Peer Support provided for individuals who have experienced both mental health and/or substance use challenges and pregnancy and/or parenthood.

Family Peer Support is provided by certified Mental Health/Recovery Peer Specialists who also have lived experience navigating pregnancy and parenthood.

8



Peer Support Core Values

1. Peer support is **voluntary**.
2. Peer supporters are **hopeful**.
3. Peer supporters are **open minded**.
4. Peer supporters **empathetic**.
5. supporters are **respectful**.
6. Peer supporters **facilitate change**.
7. Peer supporters are **honest and direct**.
8. Peer support is **mutual and reciprocal**.
9. Peer support is **equally shared power**.
10. Peer support is **strengths-focused**.
11. Peer support is **transparent**.
12. Peer support is **person driven**.

9

Characteristics of Pregnant and/Parenting Individuals at LifeWorks

<p>System(s) Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child welfare • Juvenile justice • Foster care • CPS • These systems typically have not provided services in a strengths-based, client-centered manner • Systems involvement can result in disrupted attachments and delays in the usual developmental milestones of adolescence, both for the parents we serve and their children. 	<p>Lower Income</p> <p>Most parents or expectant individuals sit well below the FPL (below 30%)</p> <p>This often results challenges obtaining tangible basics for childbirth aftercare and/or providing for their children's needs.</p> <p>Support finding resources for diapers, food, and childcare are common concerns for individuals navigating parenthood.</p>
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Characteristics of Pregnant and/Parenting Individuals at LifeWorks

<p>Trauma</p> <p>Most individuals have experienced significant trauma prior to becoming pregnant. Pregnancy and parenthood can often provide its own set of traumatic experiences, which can potentially retraumatize individuals.</p> <p>Traumatic experiences faced by pregnancy and/or parenting individuals often result in or exacerbate mental health and/or substance use challenges.</p>	<p>Housing Instability</p> <p>Often due to lower income, difficulties finding and keeping stable employment, or aging out of the foster care system, pregnant/parenting individuals end up unhoused.</p> <p>Individuals without stable and supportive housing opportunities, and the added pressure of providing for a child(ren) can also exacerbate mental health and/or substance use challenges.</p>
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Challenges and Needs for Pregnant and Parenting Individuals

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Common Challenges

Pregnancy and Parenthood commonly bring additional challenges for individuals, such as:

- Increased Stress
- Perinatal Mental Health Challenges, such as Postpartum Depression and Anxiety
- Increased Risk of Substance Use
- Suicidal Ideation

According to the CDC, in 2022 the leading underlying cause of pregnancy-related deaths was **mental health conditions** (including deaths to suicide and overdose/poisoning related to substance use disorder) (**23%**)

13

Mental Health Challenges

Each year, **500,000** pregnant women in the U.S. will experience a mental health condition either before or during pregnancy.

As many as **75%** of pregnant individuals with mental health symptoms do not receive treatment.

14

Interpersonal Violence

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022) defines interpersonal violence as abuse or aggression occurring in the context of a romantic relationship.

In the US specifically, rates range from approximately 9% to 15% for all types of IPV during pregnancy, 21% for IPV at 3 months postpartum, 16% at 6 months postpartum, 18% at 12–18 months postpartum, and 13% at 24 months postpartum (Mojahed et al. 2021).

Perinatal IPV is associated with numerous adverse mental health outcomes during pregnancy and postpartum, including substance misuse and substance use disorders, eating disorders, sleep-wake disorders, depression, OCD, and PTSD.

Other mental health-related outcomes include low self-esteem, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempt (Alhusen et al. 2015b, Chisholm et al. 2017, Campbell et al. 2021).

15

Substance Use

Substance use disorders (SUD) are becoming rapidly more prevalent in women and a leading cause of pregnancy associated deaths, with most deaths occurring during the 12 months after pregnancy.

Less than 13% of pregnant and 10% of parenting women in need of SUD treatment receive it (Martin, Scialli, et al. 2020)

Existing treatment options that specialize in the intersection of SUD and pregnancy and/or parenting are limited in nature and, as a result, difficult to access in a timely manner - if at all.

16

Suicidal Ideation

Death by suicide is a leading cause of maternal mortality and accounts for about 20% of postpartum deaths.

Suicide attempts during pregnancy and after childbirth are increasing, nearly tripling over the past decade. (Psychiatric Times, 2020)

17

Pregnancy Loss/Miscarriage/Child Loss

Pregnancy or child loss is a traumatic event that can cause significant mental and emotional distress.

Some of the major psychological effects of pregnancy loss include depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), feelings of shame and stigma, and relationship strain.

Effects of pregnancy loss often are underrecognized and untreated, leaving parents without the necessary resources and support to ensure healthy coping in the aftermath of loss.

18

Lack of Resources

Navigating pregnancy and parenthood can be a challenging task.

For individuals with limited to no resources, these tasks become much more challenging.

In addition to being expected to navigate pregnancy/parenthood, maintain their physical, mental and emotional health, and provide for their family, they are now tasked with researching numerous organizations and providers to get their needs met.

19

Why Peer Support?

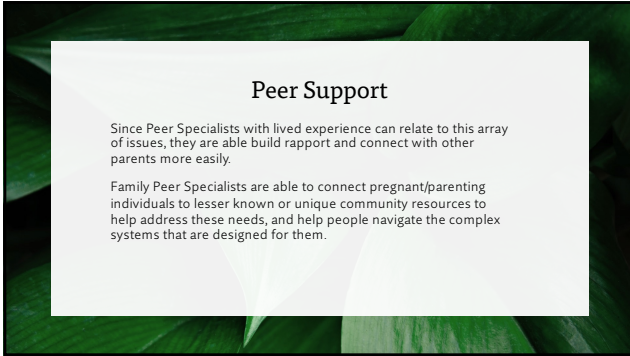
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Peer Support

In addition to the previously mentioned challenges, pregnant and parenting individuals often have additional challenges that are less widely discussed, such as bodily changes or trouble bonding/connecting with a child. These types of challenges are typically not discussed with other providers due to shame and/or embarrassment.

Family Peer Specialists are able to discuss challenges and hopes for individuals in a way that fosters a recovery mindset and reduces stigma and shame associated with MH and SUD issues for parents, aiding in the process of their recovery and healing.

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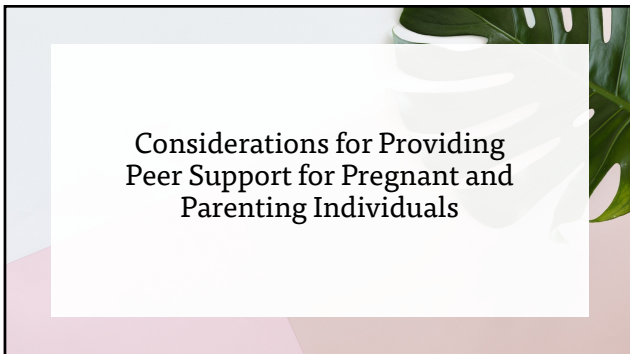


Peer Support

Since Peer Specialists with lived experience can relate to this array of issues, they are able build rapport and connect with other parents more easily.

Family Peer Specialists are able to connect pregnant/parenting individuals to lesser known or unique community resources to help address these needs, and help people navigate the complex systems that are designed for them.

22



Considerations for Providing Peer Support for Pregnant and Parenting Individuals

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Goal Planning

<p>Tailored goal planning to meet the needs of the individual and the family.</p> <p>Most individuals state their main goal is to be the best possible parent/caregiver and to provide for their family.</p>	<p>Common sessions can look like:</p> <p>Support navigating complex systems and resources (better word?) specific to pregnancy and/or parenting, such as Medicaid, the WIC program, planning for provider visits (pregnancy check ups, child check ups).</p> <p>Creating plans of action to minimize or alleviate mental health symptoms associated with pregnancy and parenthood. E.g., Customizing WRAP type plans for the postpartum period, developing a birthing plan together, creating safety plans, etc.</p>
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24

Reproductive and Sexual Health

Postpartum care should be considered an ongoing process rather than a single appointment.

Normalize sexual health conversations with pregnant and parenting individuals. Support individuals making tough decisions involving family planning and help individuals develop their goals for a successful postpartum period.

When appropriate, share any relevant lived experience with postpartum depression, anxiety, or bodily changes.

25

Resource Navigation

Maintain up to date resource lists for tangible needs, such as diapers, formula, postpartum care kits, sexual/reproductive health, and food.

Support individuals applying for or navigating complex systems for resources, such as WIC, SNAP benefits, and Medicaid.

Share your experiences with providers and various resources, so that individuals can best determine what resources might fit their individual needs.

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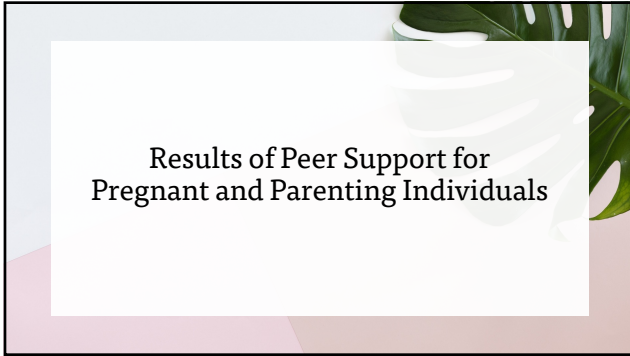
Mandatory Reporting

Be transparent and up front from the beginning. Be sure to inform youth who you must talk to, about what, and when. Ask if they have any questions to make sure they understand their rights and the policies around confidentiality and disclosure.

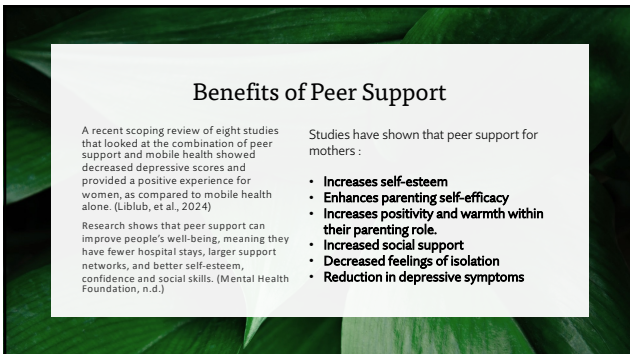
Be mindful of past traumatic experiences and that making a report could potentially retraumatize individuals and disrupt a family.

If you must make a report or disclose information, include the parent/guardian in the process as much as possible and be prepared to support them through the fallout.

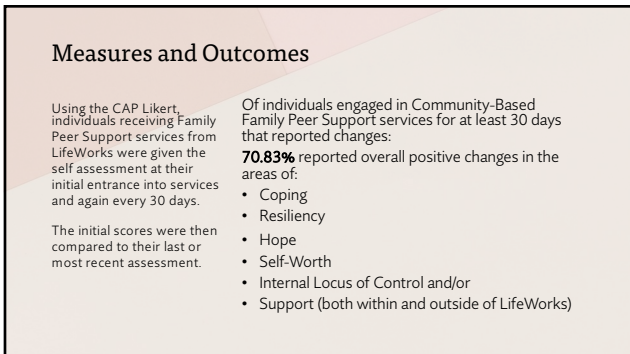
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Testimonial

"Chelsea has been a great advocate for myself. I love that I can talk about anything with Chelsea and not be judged. She is an awesome peer support specialist and an amazing friend. She helps me when I'm in need of diapers, time to talk, or sometimes even a snack. She even calms me down when I'm breaking or losing my mind. She's a great supporter."

- Jasmine J.

31

Stephanie's Story

32

References

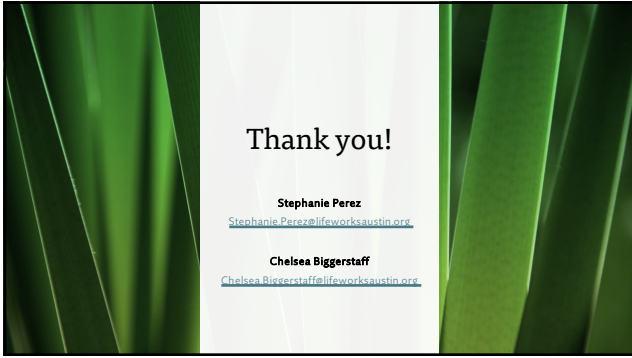
"Four in 5 Pregnancy-Related Deaths in the U.S. Are Preventable"
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 19 Sept. 2022.
www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/p0919-pregnancy-related-deaths.html.

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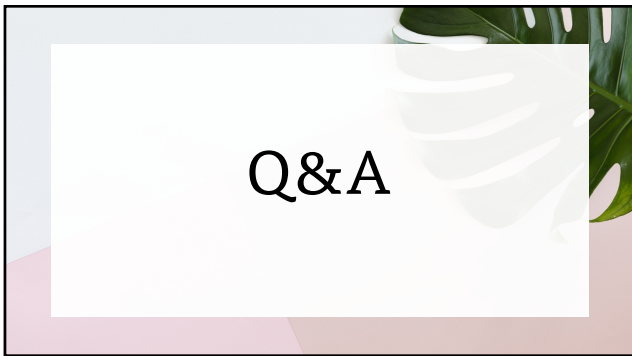
Martin CE, Parlier-Ahmad AB. **Addiction treatment in the postpartum period: an opportunity for evidence-based personalized medicine.** *Int Rev Psychiatry.* 2021 Sep;33(6):579-590. doi: [10.1080/09540261.2021.1898349](https://doi.org/10.1080/09540261.2021.1898349). Epub 2021 Jul 8. PMID: 34238101; PMCID: [PMCB490333](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/3490333/).

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www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/peer-support. --text=Research%20shows%20that%20peer%20supportLe steem%2C%20confidence%20and%20social%20skills.

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