

MassAbility

Recovery Works:

Job-driven Training for Substance Use Disorder
Treatment and Recovery

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Presenters



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Advocates for Human Potential, Inc. (AHP)

- National research and consulting company based in Massachusetts, focused on behavioral health services.
- AHP provides training, technical assistance, consulting, research and evaluation services to Federal, State and local government agencies and other organizations.
- Offices in MA, CA, IL, FL and AZ, and staff in 27 states.
- Extensive work on expanding the behavioral health workforce including:
 - Strategic planning for states and counties on BH workforce
 - Training and integrating peer recovery workers

MassAbility

- Job-driven Trainings
- Best Practice Partnerships
- Training specific to help job seekers align with industry needs

Agenda

- Section 1. Workforce Gaps in SUD Treatment
- Section 2. SUD Job-driven Training
- Section 3. Success Stories
- Section 4. Questions and Answers

Learning Objectives

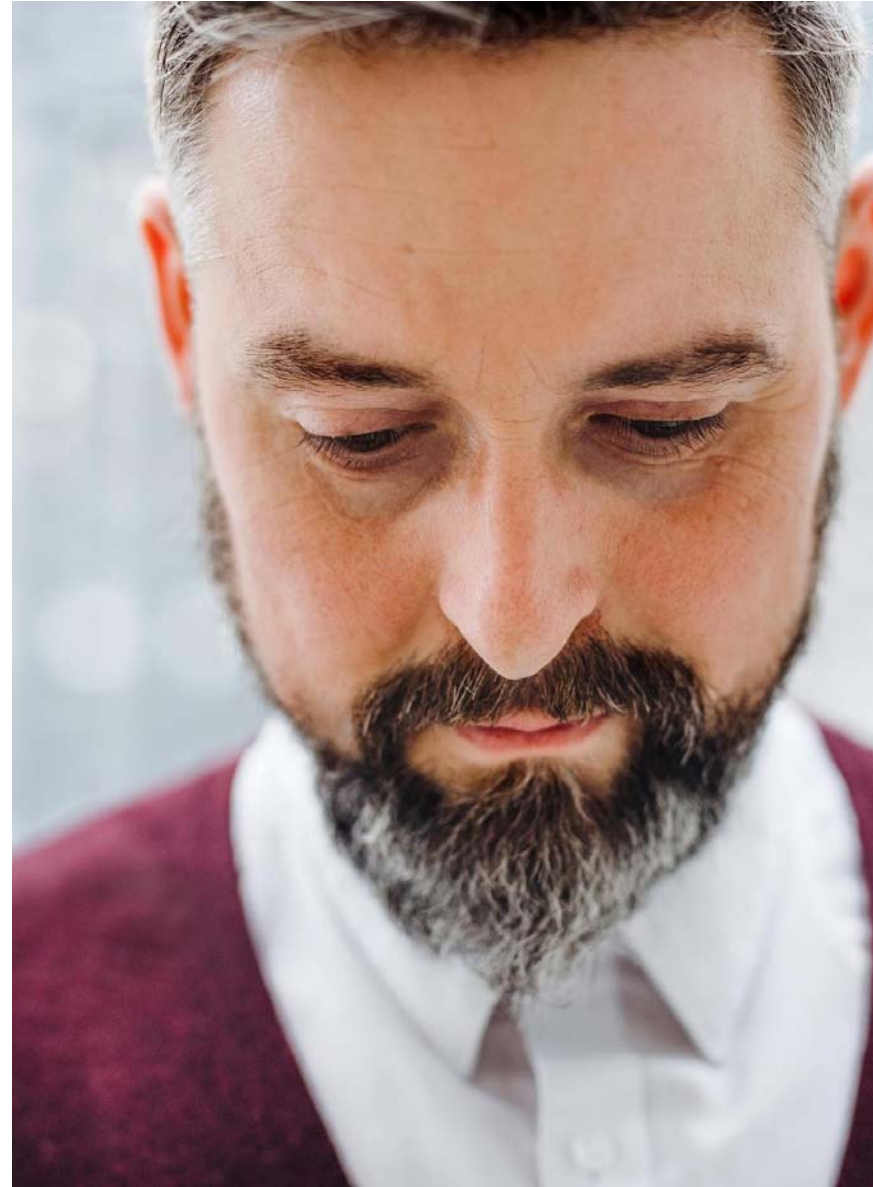
At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Describe at least two barriers and two facilitating factors in recruiting, vetting, training and job placement in the SUD treatment and recovery field.
2. Describe the process for developing a job-driven training program designed to support people with disabilities – including those in recovery – to meet the needs of employers to expand the SUD treatment and recovery workforce in a state.
3. Describe two possible considerations for selecting a training provider to meet the certification or licensing requirements of a state.

Dual Crises: Demand for SUD Treatment and Recovery, and Workforce Gaps

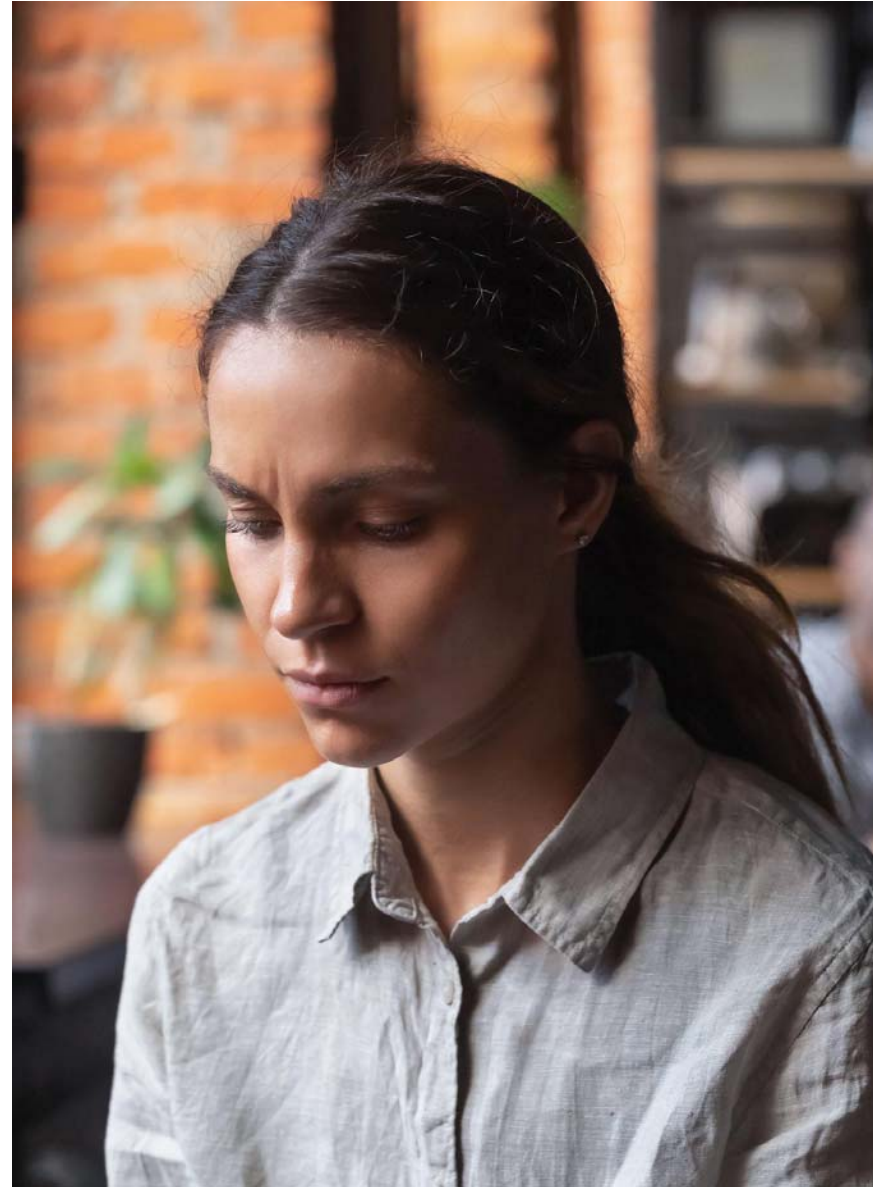
Increases in Substance Use and Mental Health Challenges

- The toll of substance use disorders (SUD) in the US is staggering and has increased for decades among adults and teens.
- Opioid use alone is the **leading cause of unintentional death** for Americans.
 - Annual societal costs are about \$787 billion (health care, premature mortality, criminal activity, and productivity loss).



Pandemic Increased Demand for Service and Reduced Workforce Supply

- Pre-pandemic, the opioid epidemic had already increased the need for treatment and subsequent staffing.
- The pandemic caused increases in mental health challenges and substance use disorders (SUDs).
- BUT... in 2022, **43%** of adults in the US who needed substance use or mental health care in the prior 12 months **did not receive that care**.





There was an SUD Workforce Crisis **Long** Before Covid

- Staffing shortages in behavioral health have existed for years, long before the pandemic, particularly in the SUD field.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) predicts that employment of behavioral health counselors will grow 19% from 2023 to 2033, faster than the average for all occupations.
- Demand will increase by nearly 19% in the next decade—from 450,000 professionals in 2023 to 534,000 by 2033.
- Working in the SUD field is very challenging!

Do People with SUDs Make Good Employees?

- Most adults with SUDs (61%) are in the workforce.
- Employees in recovery have equal or lower health care costs, absenteeism and job turnover compared to employees who never report an SUD.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
National Safety Council





Jobs in SUD Treatment and Recovery

- Most jobs in the field are generally open to anyone.
- Some jobs (peer specialists, peer recovery worker, etc.) are open **only** to be those with lived experience of recovery from SUDs.



Jobs in SUD Treatment and Recovery

- Salaries have a wide range depending on setting, location, education and experience.
- In **Massachusetts**, the range for both positions at most organizations is between \$17- \$25 per hour, with some highly experienced staff earning up to \$30 an hour.
- Other states may have much lower salaries for entry level employees



Where Can People Work?

- SUD treatment programs, including recovery homes
- Health departments
- Emergency departments
- Hospitals
- Community health centers
- Recovery support centers
- Homeless service programs
- Recovery courts (formerly known as drug courts)
- Police, fire, and rescue departments
- And many more...



Responding to the Opioid Crisis

- In 2021, MassAbility received a \$1M grant from the Department of Public Health
- Grant focused on workforce crisis in SUD and Human Service sectors
- MassAbility had historically supported SUD training through public and private entities, but completion and placement rates were not impressive
 - Community and State College System
 - Private programs like AdCare (large SUD treatment provider)



Partnering to Create Opportunities

- MassAbility explored options to increase access while taking into consideration:
 - Many job seekers have multiple disabilities
 - Job Driven Trainings a best practice at MassAbility
- Partnership with Advocates for Human Potential, Inc. (AHP)
- Developed partnership with organizations for practicum and placement opportunities statewide

Career Development, Training, and Employment for Addictions Professionals

MassAbility Job-driven Training (JDT) Program

MassAbility focused on two careers:

- Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor II (LADC II)
- Certified Addiction Recovery Coach





Job-driven Training: Recovery Coach

- Certified Addiction Recovery Coach (in MA)
 - 60 hours of virtual training
 - 500 hours of supervised work prior to become certified
 - **MUST** be in recovery
- Recommended **at least one year** of sustained, continuous recovery for **anyone** in recovery



Job-driven Training: LADC

- Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor II (LADC II)
 - 270 hours virtual training, over 54 weeks
 - 300-hour supervised practicum
 - 4,000-6,000 hours of work prior to licensing by state
 - Does **NOT** need to be in recovery
- If in recovery, recommended **at least one year** of sustained, continuous recovery

Recovery Coach Program

- 6 virtual classes (60 hours) required by the State
- Classes during the day
- Provided two manuals
- Support from MassAbility and AHP in finding a job
- Plus, optional programs:
 - 5 additional virtual trainings and optional practicum program
 - Optional practicum program





Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors II

- 270 hours virtual instruction (Six 9-week classes) over 54-week period
- Classes 2 evenings a week, 5:00–7:30
- 300-hour required practicum
- Support from MassAbility and AHP in finding practicum, and job placement
- MassAbility provided textbook
- Plus, 4 optional virtual trainings
- 4,000-6,000 hours supervised work experience prior to licensing



MassAbility's SUD Job-driven Training

- MassAbility recruitment of job seekers (minimum high school or GED)
- Career Briefing for interested job seekers and MassAbility staff, plus Question & Answer session
- Vetting by MassAbility staff
- Online application completed by job seekers



MassAbility's SUD Job-driven Training (Cont.)

- Interviews by approved training programs
- Prerequisite job/education preparedness program (added this year)
- Orientation creating community and outlining expectations
- Weekly survey of job seekers identifying their challenges
- Support by an experienced MassAbility staff member following absences and other challenges

Outcomes: SUD Training Program Completion

Recovery Coach completion numbers steadily increased

- From 2021 to 2024, **70 people** completed the Recovery Coach program.

LADC II completion numbers were much lower

- From 2021 to present, **33 people** completed the LADC program.
- One cohort (2024) has 8 people still in process.



Outcomes: SUD Employment*

Recovery Coach job placements:

- From 2021 to 2022, **21** found employment. Data not yet available for cohorts in 2023 and 2024.

LADC II job placements:

- From 2021 to 2022, **18** people found employment. Data not yet available for cohorts in 2023 and 2024.

*Some data not yet available: 2023 and 2024 cases are still open, and current LADC cohort ends in June 2025.



Barriers

Some people in recovery – especially those with less time in recovery – **may need additional supports** to be successful. Some may be facing

- Lack of academic skills/experiences in educational programs
- Concerns about returning to the workforce for either job or internship placement
- Lack of experience using technology
- Lack of a printer for hardcopy materials
- Lack of childcare available during class

Barriers

(Continued)

They may also be facing:

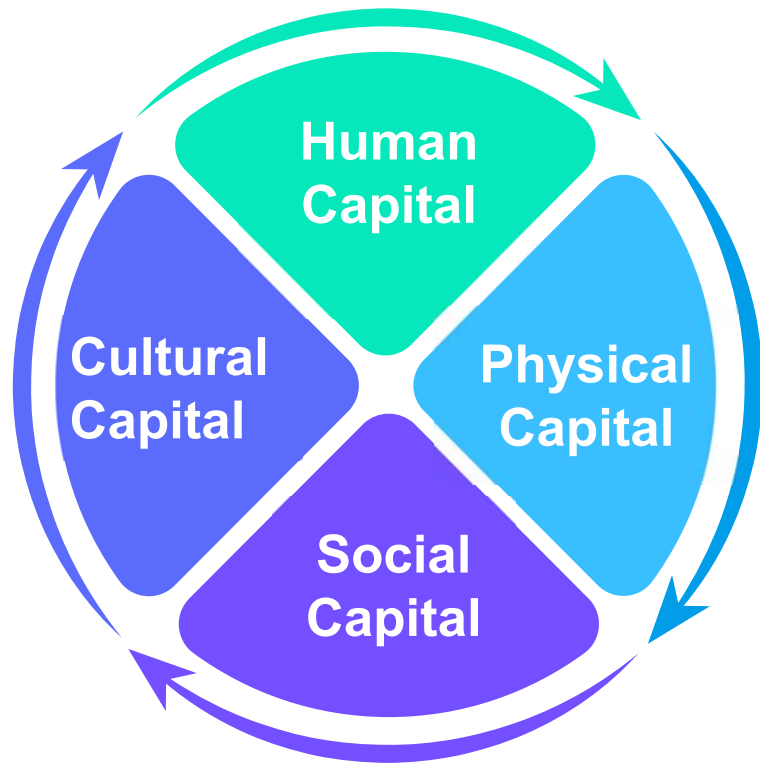
- Housing instability
- Return to use of alcohol or drugs
- Family problems
- Criminal record that may prevent hiring in some programs

LADC program was more challenging than the Recovery Coach program

- LADC is much longer than Recovery Coach program (8-10 weeks vs. 54 weeks)
- LADC involved more academic skills

Facilitating Factors

- Length of time in recovery
- Basic+ academic skills
- Comfort with (or willingness to learn) technology used for online learning
- Stability
- **Recovery Capital**



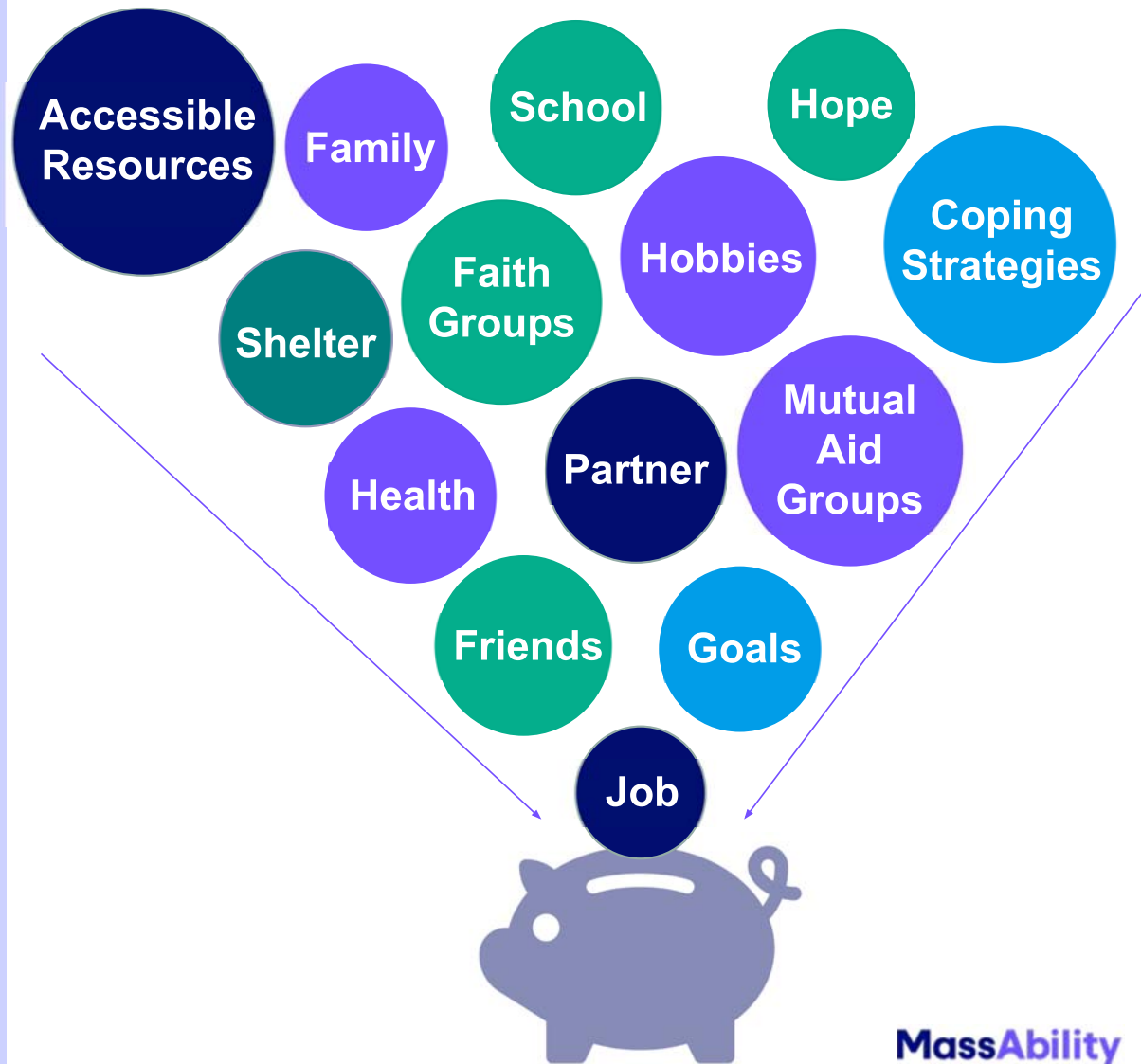
Recovery Capital is...

...the **depth and breadth** of **internal and external resources** that can be used by someone to **begin and sustain wellness** from addiction.

(Granfield & Cloud, 1999; Cloud & Granfield, 2004)

Recovery Capital

You can think of recovery capital **like money in the bank**: The more you deposit, the more you can withdraw in times of need



Process Improvements Through Lessons Learned

- Each year MassAbility and AHP made improvements:
 - AHP implemented brief weekly online survey to assess challenges
 - Immediate follow-up by MassAbility and training program staff
 - MassAbility added an experienced Employment Retention Specialist to support students during the training and beyond
 - Provided printed materials and textbooks sent to their homes

Process Improvements Through Lessons Learned

(Continued)

- Training programs met more regularly with MassAbility and AHP to problem-solve
- In 2024, added 3-week prerequisite program (36 hours) to support skill development, motivation, and prepare job seekers for success in training
- In 2024 MassAbility provided stipends for students during programming
 - This is also an SUD treatment strategy called **contingency management**



Program Design

- Program must be designed to meet SUD employer needs
- Consider a prerequisite preparedness training to build skill and motivation
- Program should include supports for job seekers
- Consider length of time in recovery and plan to address criminal record concerns
- Assess barriers job seekers will face in accessing training
- Vet candidates **very thoroughly!**



Training Vendors

- Considerations for designing training program and selecting vendors:
 - Find out if training programs in your state require approval of state for licensing and/or credentialing and use those programs
 - Work with statewide SUD/behavioral health provider organizations and SUD peer support organizations
 - Vendors with virtual programs can serve your entire state, but not every job seeker wants or feels comfortable with virtual

Success Stories

Voices from the SUD Treatment Field in Massachusetts



“The fact that we all began the class unemployed and now almost half of us are employed just blows me away.”

“I never thought when I entered this program that I would now be supporting 27 recoverees as a Recovery Coach for a behavioral health organization.”

“Being returned to an educational learning environment in a respectful and meaningful way. This program let me return to education without feeling embarrassed or belittled.”



Success Stories

Frazier Jones

Recovery Coach Graduate 2022

Full-time Recovery Coach serving the deaf community through the Gandara Center, Brockton, MA

Focusing on supporting individuals with substance use and incarceration challenges



Success Stories

Mark Van Zant

LADC II Graduate 2024

After 32 years in prison, connected with MassAbility upon release, wanted to help others

Completed the LADC program and is now working in his community supporting young men with SUD



Questions?

MassAbility

Presenter Contact Information



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