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# Peer Landscape in Oregon

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Amy Baker, MSW  
Behavioral Health Initiative Director

# Peers Offer Hope Through Shared Experience



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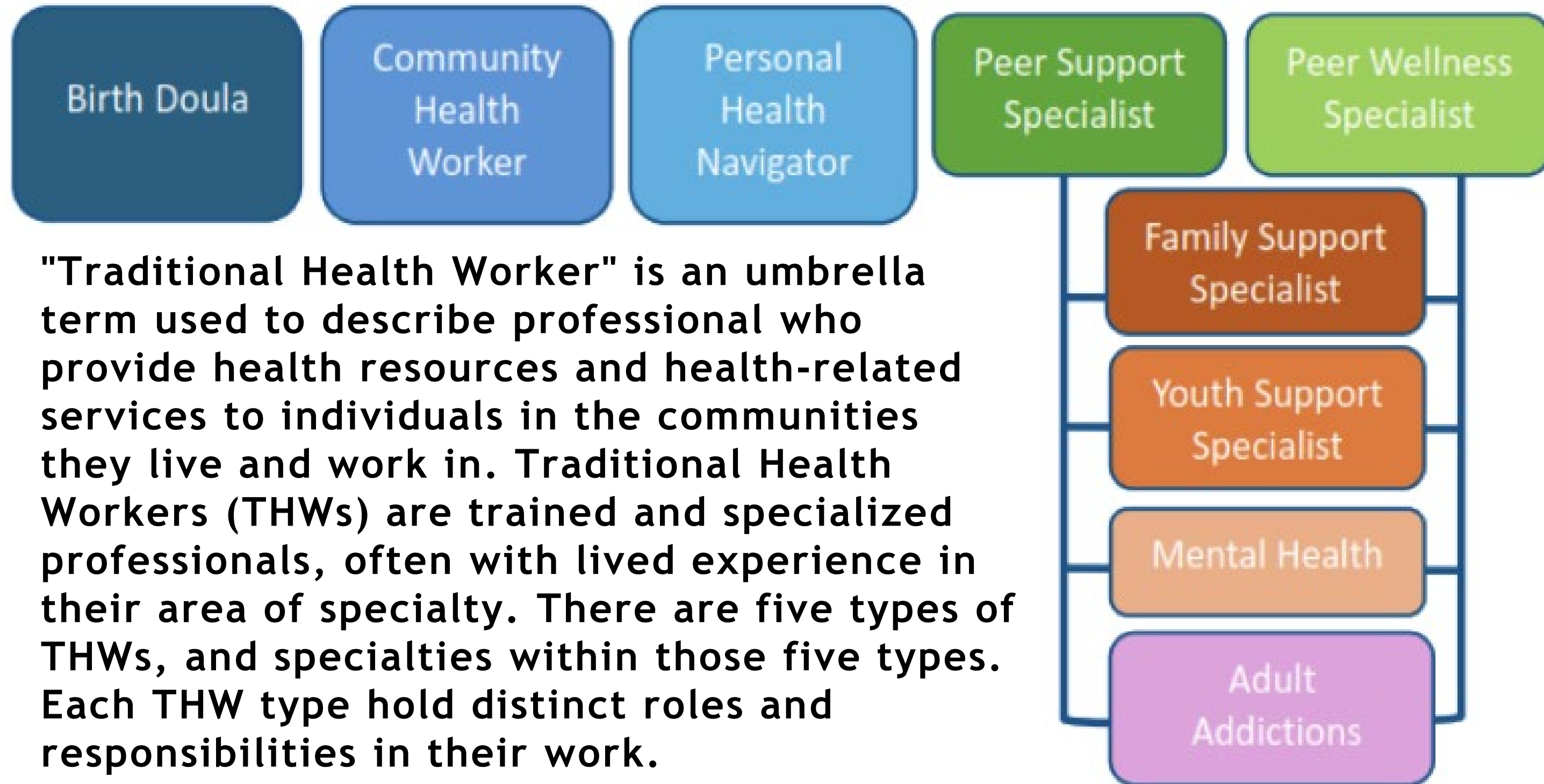
“Unlike clinical roles, which focus on diagnosis, treatment planning, and symptom management within a hierarchical framework, peer support is based on equality, shared understanding, and empowerment. It emphasizes hope, recovery, and self-determination, operating from the belief that people are experts in their own lives and capable of creating meaningful change and making meaning from their life experiences.”

-- Malcom Aquinas, Peer Support Specialist at Oregon State Hospital (OSH)

# Traditional Health Workers



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# Four Categories of Peer Support Specialists



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***Family Support Specialist (FSS):*** an individual who meets qualification criteria adopted under ORS 414.665 and may be either a peer support specialist or a peer wellness specialist who, based on similar life experiences, provides support services to and has experience parenting a child who:

- (a) Is a current or former consumer of mental health or addiction treatment; or
- (b) Is facing or has faced difficulties in accessing education, health, and wellness services due to mental health or behavioral health barriers.

***Youth Support Specialist (YSS):*** means an individual who meets qualification criteria adopted under ORS 414.665 and may be either a peer support specialist or a peer wellness specialist and who, based on a similar life experience, provides supportive services to an individual who:

- (a) Is not older than 30 years old, and
- (b) Is a current or former consumer of mental health or addiction treatment; or
- (c) Is facing or has faced difficulties in accessing education, health, and wellness services due to mental health or behavioral health barriers.

***Adult Addictions:*** A person in addiction recovery who provides support services to people seeking recovery from addiction.

***Adult Mental Health:*** A person with lived experience of mental health who provides support services to other people with similar experiences

# Peer Support Specialist (PPS) Peer Wellness Specialist (PWS)



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Aspect	Peer Support Specialist (PSS)	Peer Wellness Specialist (PWS)
Core focus / roles	Primarily support services based on lived experience: mutual support, helping others with similar situations (mental health, addiction, etc.). More about being “alongside” the person in recovery.	More expansive: includes assessment of needs, outreach, helping people access broader services & resources, addressing barriers, stigma reduction, wellness promotion, integrating behavioral health and physical health, supporting maintenance of health & wellness.
Training hours	40-hour approved training program for PSS.	80-hour approved training program for PWS (i.e. more hours).
Scope / responsibilities	May include: peer mentoring, helping with recovery planning, sharing lived experience, emotional support, connecting with other peers, possibly helping with accessing services. But typically not as much formal responsibility for assessments or outreach broadly.	In addition to support functions, PWS are expected to assess needs, do community outreach, help reduce stigma, assist with education/information, serve as part of a health home / integrated care team, perhaps more proactively bridging behavioral / physical health care.
Supervision & oversight	Both require supervision (clinical supervisor and peer-delivered services supervisor) under OAR rules.	Same requirement of supervision but given that PWS may have more responsibilities (assessment, outreach), the nature of supervision may be somewhat more structured or involve coordination with health home/primary care.
Certifications / Registry	PSS must be certified by the Oregon Health Authority’s Traditional Health Worker program, complete the required training, pass background checks, etc.	Likewise, PWS must be certified, with their higher training requirement. Also, those with PWS often are part of coordinated care/health home teams.



# Peer Scope of Practice



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## **Outreach and Direct Service**

- Using relationship, compassion and personal experience to connect with another human who is struggling with their own or a family members behavioral health needs. Meeting individuals in non-clinical spaces, etc.

## **Care Coordination and Basic Needs Support**

- Assisting in connecting individuals to needed resources and services

## **Coaching and Social Support**

- Helping someone find employment, how to present in an IEP meeting, strategies to deal with hearing voices, accompanying someone to an AA meeting

## **Advocacy and Cultural Mediation**

- Advocate for individuals and policy recommendations to make systems and services more client centered. Provide education on how culture intersects and affects individuals with behavioral health needs
- Education
- Educate the broader community about having lived experience, the intersection between cultural values and needs and the behavioral health system.

# Certification of Peer Specialists



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## Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Traditional Health Worker Registry

### Peer Support Specialist (PSS):

- Attend an OHA approved **40 hour training program** *or* Legacy/Reciprocity pathway
- Complete the THW Oral Health training
- Certify as a Traditional Health Worker through OHA
- OHA Background Check & Fingerprints
- Obtain a National Provider Identification (NPI) number (for billing purposes)
- Enroll as an Oregon Medicaid provider through OHA (for billing purposes)
- 20-40 hours of CEUs every 3 years for recertification

### Peer Wellness Specialist (PWS):

- Attend an OHA approved **80 hour training program** *or* Legacy/Reciprocity pathway
- Complete the THW Oral Health training
- Certify as a Traditional Health Worker through OHA
- OHA Background Check & Fingerprints
- Obtain a National Provider Identification (NPI) number (for billing purposes)
- Enroll as an Oregon Medicaid provider through OHA (for billing purposes)
- 20 hours of CEUs every 3 years for recertification

# Certification of Peer Specialists



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## Mental Health & Addiction Certification Board of Oregon (MHACBO)

### Certified Recovery Mentor (CRM I)

- Attend an OHA approved 40 hour addiction training program
- Complete the THW Oral Health training
- MHACBO CRM Ethics Quiz
- MHACBO Background Check
- Min 2 years in recovery as of January 1st 2025
- 20 hours of CEUs every 2 years for recertification

### Certified Recovery Mentor (CRM II)

- High School Diploma/GED
- Completion of CRM I (see above)
- 40 additional hours of advanced training
- CRM II Exam
- 500 Supervised Internship Hours in IC&RC Peer Domains (may be used toward CADC I requirement)
- MHACBO Background Check
- Min 2 years in recovery
- Signed Code of Conduct

\*Completion of the CRM II credential will grant national reciprocal status between jurisdictions using the IC&RC Peer Recovery (PR) exam. Currently, more than half of U.S. States hold national reciprocity for the CRM II.



# Traditional Health Worker Cert.

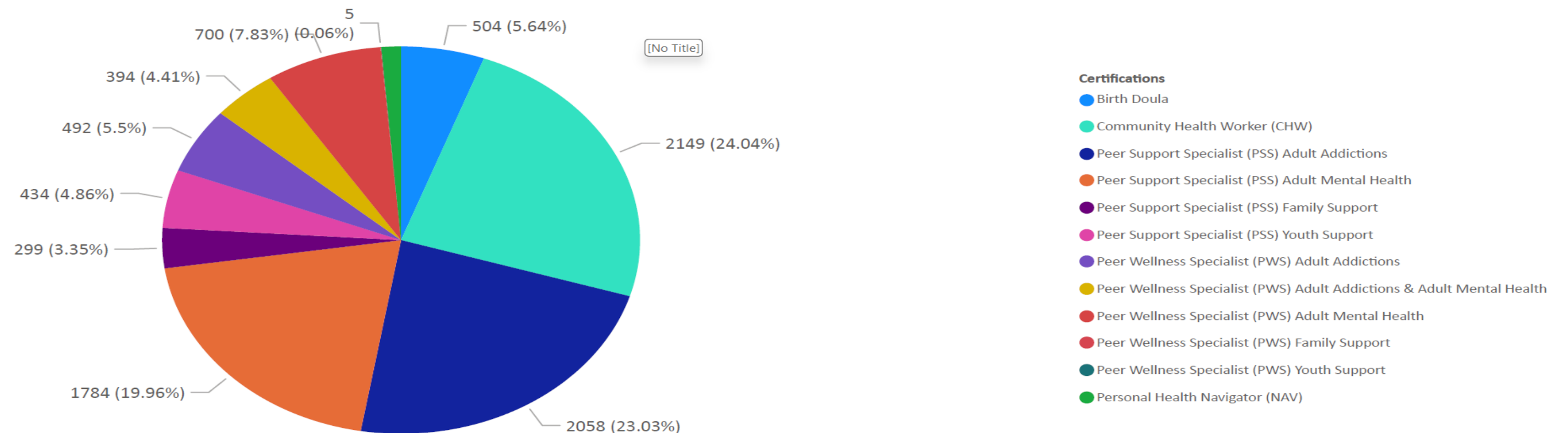


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## Traditional Health Worker Certification Dashboard

**7578**  
Active Registrants

### All Certifications



**8938**

Active Certifications

**504**

Birth Doula Certifications

**2149**

CHW Certifications

**118**

NAV Certifications

**4575**

PSS Certifications

**1592**

PWS Certifications

# CRM Credentialed Practitioners

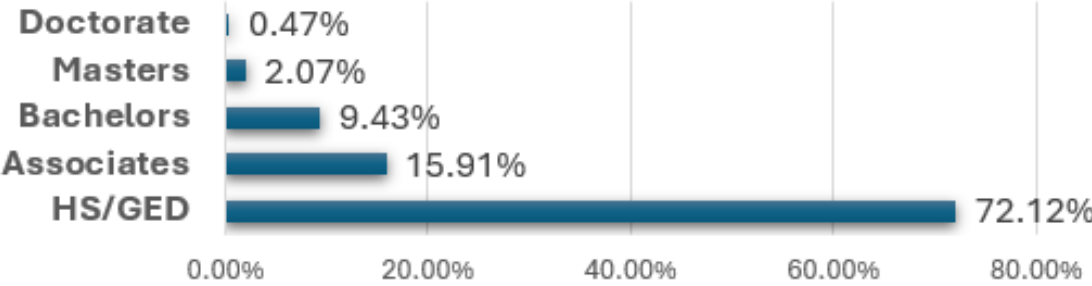


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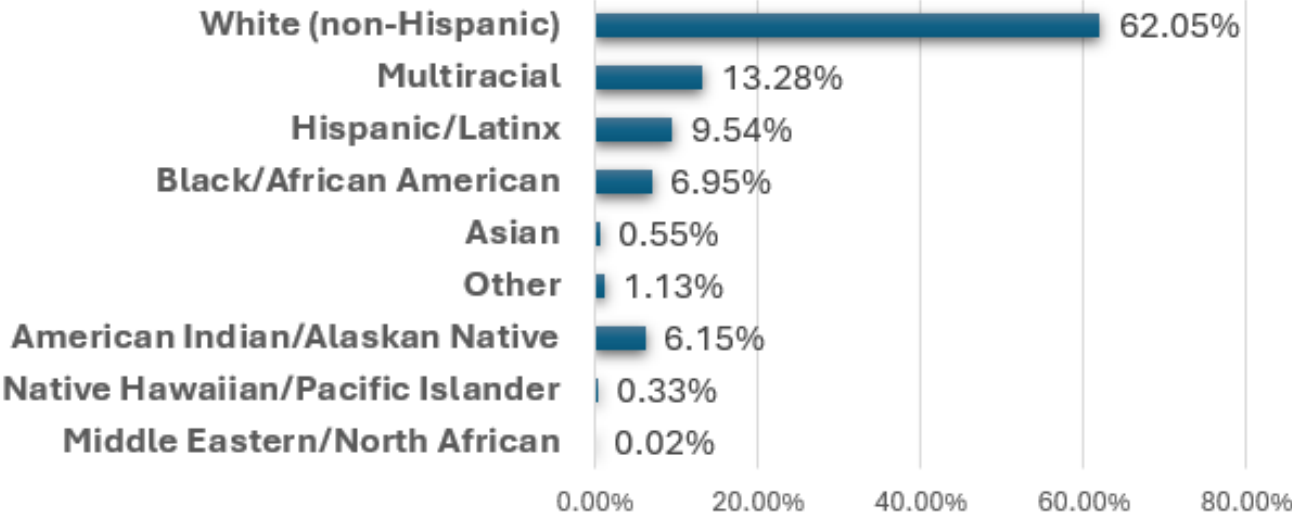
**MHACBO  
Certified  
Peer CRMs  
(3,941)**

Peer CRM	CRM	CRM-II
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• OHA/MHACBO Accredited 40 hour peer training</li><li>• Oral Health Training</li><li>• Background Check</li><li>• Verification of Recovery Status</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 40 Additional training hours in advanced peer subjects</li><li>• Background Check</li><li>• IC&amp;RC (36 U.S. States) Reciprocal Professional Psychometric Exam</li></ul>

**CRM: Education**



**CRM: Race/Ethnicity**





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# Questions?

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