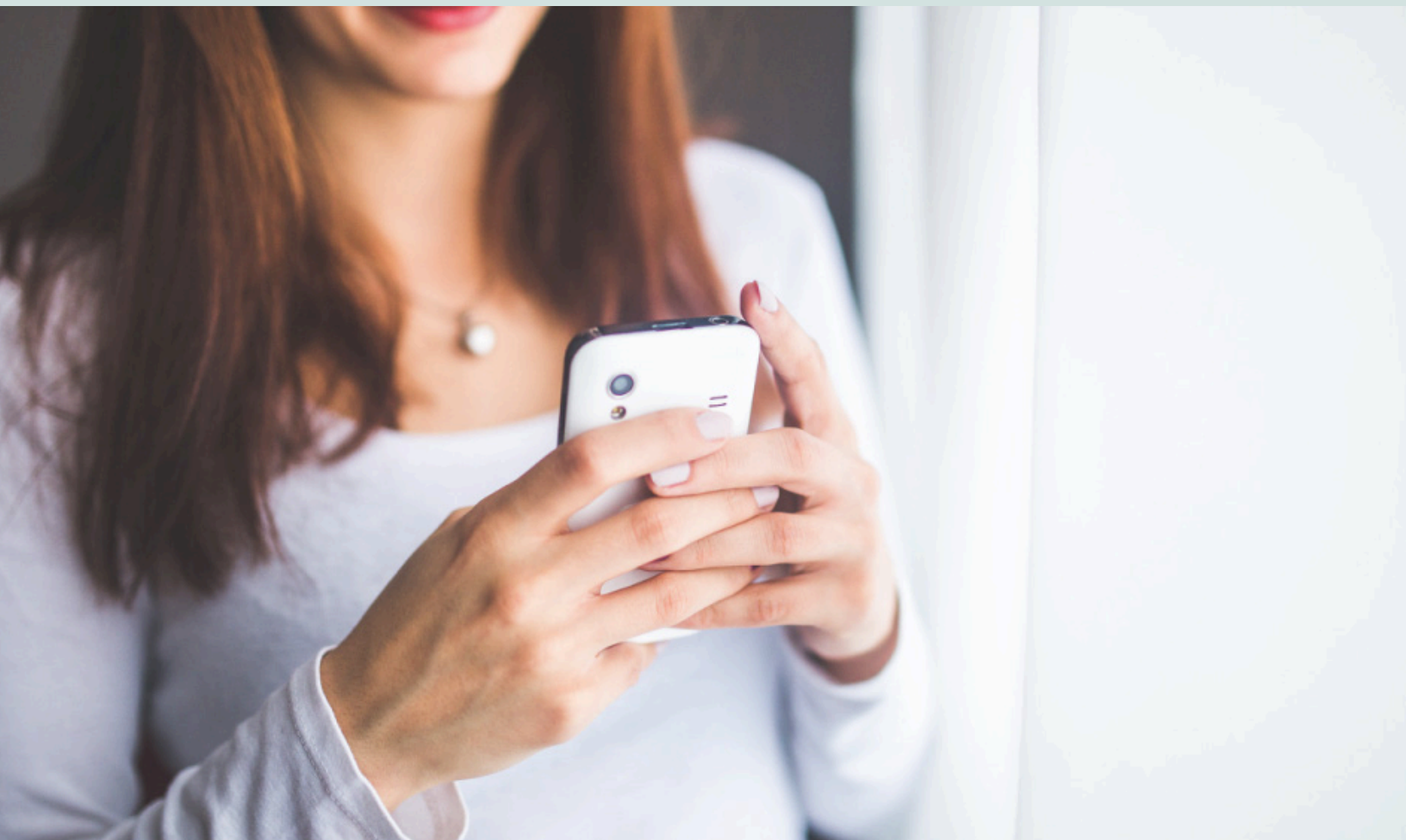


Telehealth Peer Support Benefits for the Workforce



Mental illness has been a long-avoided topic in the workplace. But as rates of suicide, substance abuse, anxiety, loneliness and depression increase, more employers are making these issues a top priority.



Until recently, Employers, Employee Assistance Programs, and Benefit Providers have turned to telehealth behavioral services, such as online therapy, to fill this need.

However, there are growing “cracks” in these services that result in lower than optimal utilization rates. The shortage of licensed mental health professionals has resulted in rising costs and longer wait times. The stigma of seeking help from a therapist or other clinicians persists to deter utilization, even in an online setting. And many behavioral telehealth programs are designed around short-term or episodic treatment, and fail to match up with the longer-term care required for many emotional and behavioral health challenges, such as those that experience a common comorbidity – depression and chronic diseases such as diabetes.

In response, we created HeyPeers. A lower-cost, stigma-free, and longer-term behavioral telehealth platform leveraging the proven resource of peer support that complements clinical telehealth and provides better results for your workforce and your bottom line.

Peer Support as a Software-Enabled Solution

HeyPeers is an online platform (web and mobile application) that matches up and confidentially connects those seeking behavioral and emotional health support with peers that are qualified to help them on their journey towards coping, healing, or recovering.

Employers, Employee Assistance Programs, and Benefit Providers can leverage our network of experienced and certified peer support specialists and coaches and our enterprise-grade software platform to provide their employees, clients, and covered lives (“members”) with online personalized group or one-on-one coaching at rates below behavioral telehealth programs.

Our view is that peer support is a good complement to clinical behavioral health because it meets the needs for a large percentage of the population that fear the stigma of seeing a therapist, psychologist, or psychiatrist, cannot afford long-term treatment related to chronic challenges, or have challenges such as loneliness that may fall “outside the scope” of what this population perceives as a health care issue.

HeyPeers’ pricing model is similar to other telehealth software as a service. There is a base cost per member, a one-time new administrative fee, and a utilization fee that is based on the type of peer support (group or one-on-one coaching) and the number of enrolled support sessions.

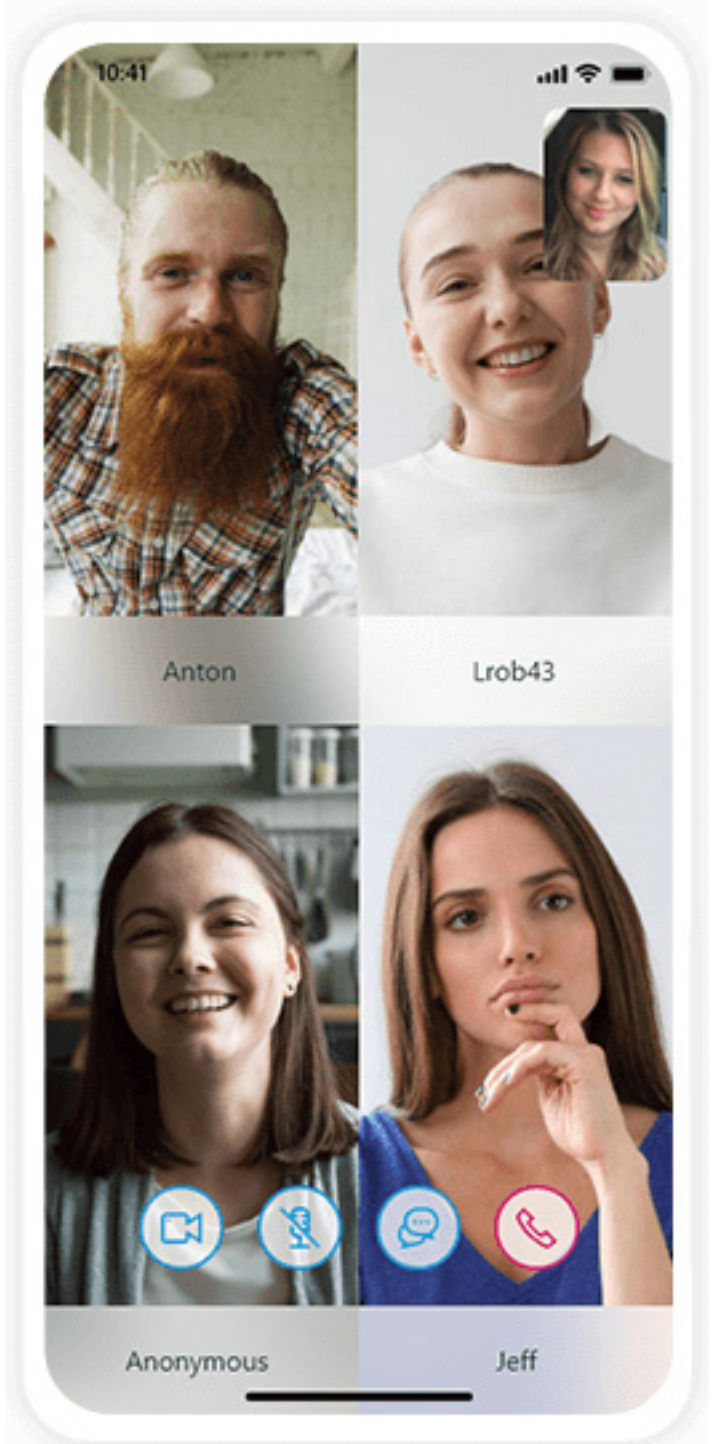
The HeyPeers software platform offers the following features:

- + Uses evidence-based assessments to help determine the best peer support groups or coaching matches for your individual members;
- + Provides short, mid-term, and longer-term care offerings that include evidence-based programs and tools;
- + Network expertise includes a growing body of emotional and behavioral health challenges, from anxiety and depression to caregiving, grief and addiction;
- + In application video (anonymous or identified) and chat sessions;
- + Self-service scheduling;
- + Configurable on-boarding and registration, including workflows that support case management referrals, tracking, and reporting;
- + Configurable surveys to track quality of service;
- + Population analytics to track utilization rates, wellness trends, and outcomes;
- + Security and confidentiality for users; and
- + Dashboards for members and organizations to track progress and key metrics.

How Does HeyPeers Work?

Like other health care benefits, HeyPeers is available to your workforce and covered lives population with a hybrid pricing model – a low per “member” monthly fee and a utilization fee that depends on the frequency of usage and the preference to utilize peer groups or one-to-one coaching.

We offer custom onboarding processes and peer support program/peer supporter/coaching matching for employees and any additional covered lives (“members”). For EAPs and Benefit Providers, we have designed case management tools so that there is an easy-to-use process for registering, referring, and tracking members. We provide a set of analytic tools, including participation activity, wellness tracking, and configurable surveys so you can track utilization and outcomes of your population.





What is Peer Support?

The National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI) defines peer support as a voluntary gathering of people with similar challenges to share experiences and coping strategies and offer understanding. Peer support in live sessions has been an accepted practice for decades, playing a role in local behavioral health support.

HeyPeers takes peer support several steps forward by introducing trained and certified peer support specialists to help guide groups or one-to-one coaching and by providing unique data analytic tools to enable Employers, Employee Assistance Programs, and Benefit Providers to help measure and track the costs and outcome benefits from peer support for their population.

HeyPeers uses a network of trained and certified peer support specialists and coaches, and we employ a mental health clinician to supervise our network. There are many public health and private organizations that provide peer support training programs, and each state offers peer support certification based on similar training requirements.

What are the Benefits of Peer Support?

There have been a number of research studies by independent researchers on peer support outcomes, including peer support that is delivered remotely. In short, studies have found that online peer support can deliver significant health care cost reductions and similar levels of improvement in healthcare and quality of life outcomes.

For example, studies have found that



quality of life improves, such as positive social engagement



severity of behavioral health conditions decreases by approximately 50%



hospital and inpatient readmissions fall by 50%

Peer support, because of its low delivery costs, is often more attractive than traditional therapy by those that need help over a longer period of time than traditional therapy. This is an important advantage to shorter term and more costly therapy because many behavioral health challenges are long-term and costly conditions that need long-term attention. For example, conditions such as bipolar disorder, addiction, and those that have experienced extreme trauma are often life-time challenges. In addition, there is a high rate of behavioral health co-morbidity with chronic disease such as diabetes, heart, and kidney disease where short term traditional therapy does not deliver sustainable support.

“Recent studies on the cost of depression in the workplace have caught the attention of employers, especially those that address comorbidity,” she said. “When a patient has chronic conditions like asthma, diabetes or cancer, the cost to treat those conditions is two to three times higher when the patient suffers from depression.”

Darcy Gruttadaro, director, Center for Workplace Mental Health at the American Psychiatric Association Foundation, from Workforce.com, 2018.



Delivery of Peer Support for the Workforce

HeyPeers was designed to enable Employers, Employee Assistance Programs, and Benefit Providers to deliver high-quality and cost-effective online peer support for the workforce and “covered lives” with seamless onboarding tools, performance tracking metrics, and population outcomes analytics.

We offer packaged structured peer support programs that are facilitated by Certified HeyPeers Coaches™ that have experience across a wide spectrum of challenges, including stress, anxiety, loneliness, depression, relationships, and addiction. Our programs are science-based and designed to help those seeking peer support with reachable milestones along their journey and enable users to measure their own progress.

We match demand from your workforce or members with the appropriate group Peer Support Specialists or one-to-one Coaches, and include evidence-based content and programs that can be delivered with time frames to match personal challenges. HeyPeers Peer support can be delivered in online anonymous or video group settings or in one-to-one sessions.

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