

# Using research and evidence to inform a federal agency's response to the opioid and substance use epidemic

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## Introduction

- Peer recovery coaching is a promising strategy to address rising rates of substance use disorders (SUDs) and drug overdose.
- As a type of peer support, a nonclinical professional with lived SUD experience provides guidance to individuals with a SUD by helping them access care, develop a personalized plan to promote long-term recovery, and remove barriers to recovery (for example, housing, employment, or transportation).
- Our research aims to:
  - Describe peer recovery coaching model approaches, including promising practices and implementation challenges.
  - Understand how peer recovery coaching improves outcomes for organizations, peer recovery coaches, and program participants.

## Methods

- Mixed methods approach that examined implementation and outcomes of peer recovery coaching models across four different AmeriCorps grantees.
- A subsample of program participants receiving recovery coaching services were compared to program participants not receiving recovery coaching services.
- AmeriCorps contracted with an independent consultant, ICF International, to conduct the evaluation.
- Data sources included:
  - Surveys and interviews/focus groups with grant directors, peer recovery coaches, program participants, and comparison group members that did not receive peer recovery coaching
  - Grantee program documents



# Peer-recovery coaching models used by AmeriCorps-funded organizations can help mitigate substance use disorders and enhance organizational capacity



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## Results

### Implementation Findings:

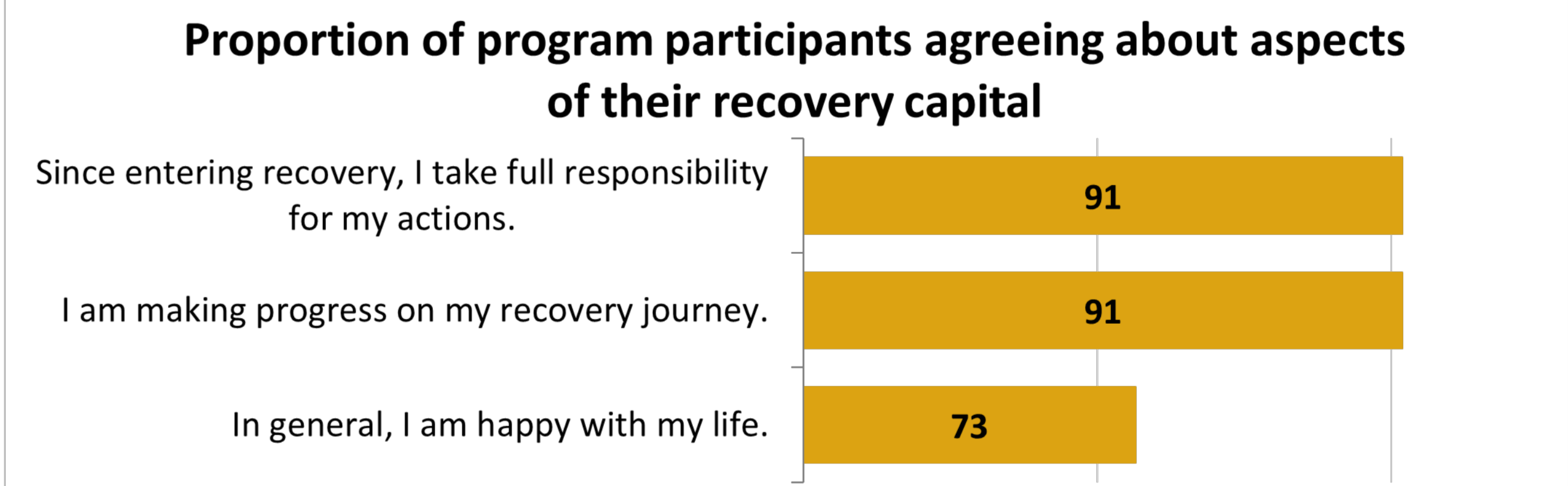
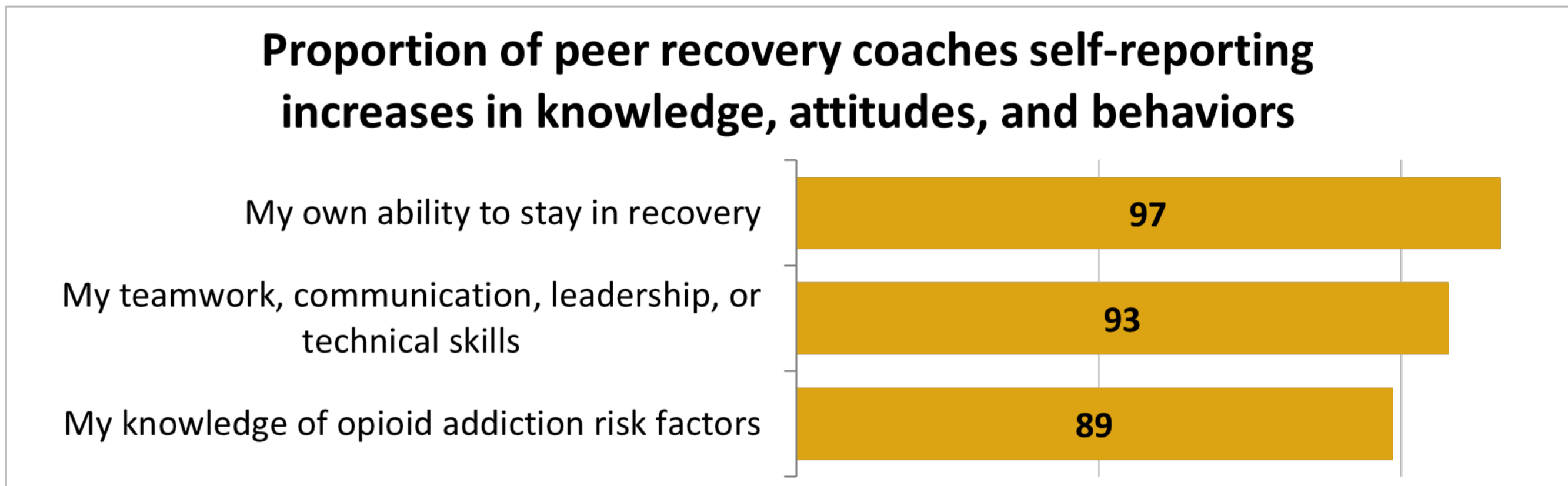
- Lived experience is crucial to peer recovery coaching because it facilitates relationship-building between coaches and participants.
- Peer recovery coaches support participants in recovery from SUDs and mental health diagnoses.

*I said I just want to talk for a minute. And so, they let me talk. They cried with me and they let me get this mess out.*  
Program participant

*I will definitely give them names of facilities that I have experience with or I've heard good things about and then they [the participants] make the phone call.*  
Peer recovery coach

### Outcomes Findings:

- Grantees reported capacity improvements in providing services, leveraging financial support, and collaborating with partners.
- Peer recovery coaches reported increased knowledge, improved attitudes and behaviors, as well as increased opportunities for maintaining their own recovery.
- Program participants reported high levels of recovery capital (internal and external resources that enhance capacity for and commitment to living a sober life), which were greater than their counterparts who did not receive peer recovery coaching.



## Discussion

- Grant organizations implemented peer recovery coach programs that met the needs of the populations served.
- Grant organizations, peer recovery coaches, and program participants reported favorable outcomes.
- National services members successfully supported others in recovery while maintaining their own recovery.