

# SOBER PEER FORWARD

Issue 1 | April 2020



Behavioral Science Made Mobile

## What Is Sober Peer

Sober Peer is a new mobile health platform designed to help substance users move from addiction to sobriety. Our digital health technology delivers the science behind the behavior of persons who practice risky drug and alcohol use. Using artificial intelligence, our technology predicts client behavior that aids in better recovery outcomes. This new approach is unlike any other platforms designed for those suffering from substance abuse.

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Peer Reviewed

## Deeper Insight—Faster Recovery

Any healthcare professional or counselor wants to know if technology can help them and their substance abuse patients. And they want independent verification that the technology platform is viable. For Sober Peer, the answer came from a couple of academic heavyweights.

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I Know What It's Like

## How Sober Peer Helps My Students

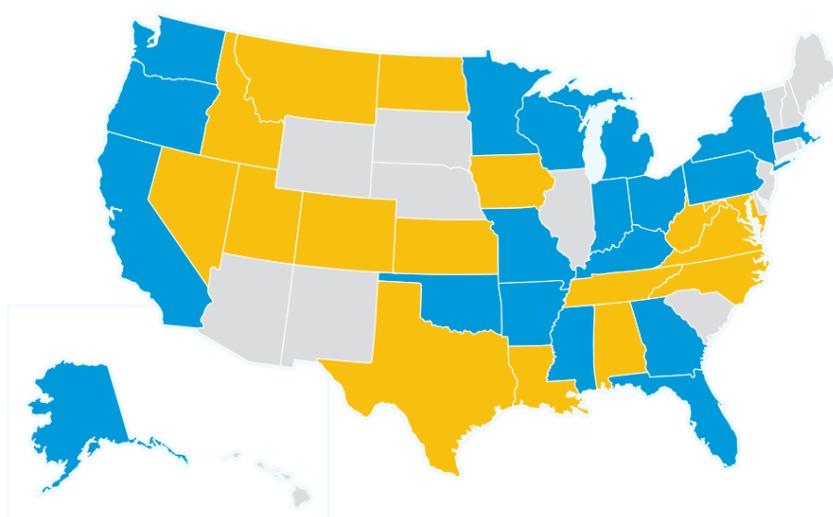
The Rev. Jason Peltier, Program Manager of Teen Challenge, knows how hard it is to get the right treatment for substance abuse. In fact, he needed treatment to help overcome his own substance abuse issues—twice.

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Building a National Network

## Join the Revolution



Sober Peer recently completed a broad pilot program with substance use patients at 22 residential centers in 16 states (yellow). Sober Peer is now expanding its reach to treatment centers in 20 additional states (blue) and to individual substance users via our mobile app nationwide.

[JOIN US](#)



Never. Rarely. Sometimes. Always.

## Foundation for Treatment— Sober Signals™

Sober Peer is **digital health technology** that delivers **the science behind the behavior** of persons who practice **risky drug and alcohol use**. After securing the client's express permission, our mobile app collects up to 500 behavioral signals per day per client. These signals are gathered through the client's interactions with the App through activities such as reporting their mood, taking surveys, making posts or comments, chatting with their counselor, completing a telehealth session, managing their trigger places, and other activities. These Sober Signals are shared in real-time and are continuously analyzed by our AI to assess, measure, predict and prescribe the best next steps. This ability to translate mountains of data into clear patterns of behavior offers deeper insights for treatment professionals and result in better advice, treatment plans, and outcomes.

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Any Questions

## Why Is Sober Peer the Answer?

“Conversations” is a regular Q&A feature that enables thought leaders in the addiction and recovery sector to answer questions and share insights on important and emerging topics. In this issue we go straight to the top and talk with Ed DeShields, the founder and chief executive officer of Sober Peer.

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SOBER PEER

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## Sober Peer Platform Shows Deeper Patient Insight Leads to Faster Recovery

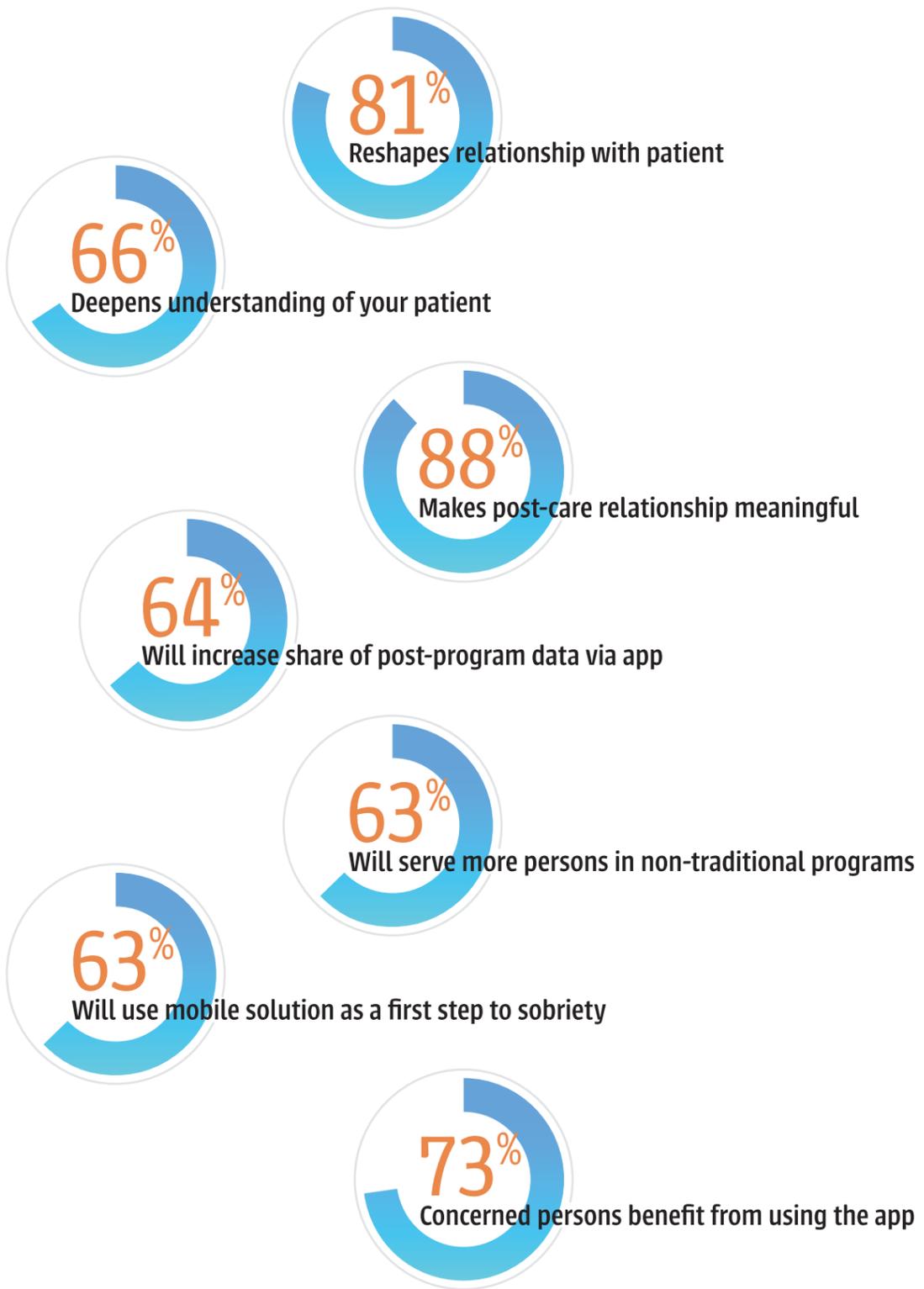
### Research Included MIT, Harvard Peer Review of AI-Drive Platform

Any healthcare professional or counselor wants to know if technology can help them and their substance abuse patients. And they want independent verification that the technology platform is viable.

We rigorously tested our ideas and platform to ensure it delivers on the promise to bring the science behind understanding client behavior to improving treatment. Our validation efforts included 7-week peer reviews of the artificial intelligence and machine learning components at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Computer Science and AI Lab; and the platform model at Harvard University Business School.

Development of our platform began near the end of 2018 and beta testing began in 2019. The pilot deployment included 22 addiction recovery centers in 16 states. Early responses from substance abuse coaches and counselors show the platform is helping counselors identify core issues faster and is speeding up the recovery process.

Sober Peer's beta tests produced these findings from substance abuse coaches and counselors that are encouraging. Here is what they said:



### Sober Peer Needs You!

Sober Peer is actively recruiting licensed counselors and certified coaches to join our Network. We need coverage for the entire country and we pay counselors and coaches to provide care to recovering substance users enrolled on our platform. Email us at [info@soberpeer.com](mailto:info@soberpeer.com) for more details.

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A Counselor's Story

## How Sober Peer Helps My Students

**By Rev. Jason Peltier,**

Program Manager, Teen Challenge Southeast Region

I know how hard it is to get the right treatment for substance abuse. Twice, in 2008 and 2013, I needed treatment to help overcome my own substance abuse issues.

I've been a counselor here since 2014, helping others on their road to recovery. But during the past year, we've taken a new approach that is helping us treat people more quickly and with better results. We are now using Sober Peer, a new mobile health platform that helps us better assess the cause of our students' substance abuse issues. It also helps us measure each person's progress and recommend treatment during the recovery process.

During the past year, more than 20 students at our residential facility here have received Sober Peer behavioral support with their recovery. Here's how it helps:

**It Starts with Sober Signals™.** Each student fills out a weekly survey that provides a comprehensive view of their life. They answer questions about their employment and financial situation, family life, mental and physical health, legal issues and use of alcohol, drug and other substances. We find out if they are working regularly, suffering from any physical pain or may be experiencing marital problems.

The answers we get from these surveys are "game changers" that deepen our understanding of the problems they face and how we can help. It helps us recognize problems the student may never admit in a face-to-face conversation, especially during the first months of treatment when they often don't trust others.

**Evaluation and Treatment.** Sober Peer takes the Sober Signals™ answers and calculates a weekly score for each person, allowing us to see the severity of their addiction and state of their mental health. With this profile, we can better understand their mindset and the reasons they are struggling to control their addiction.

Poor scores in one or more categories reshape our relationship with each person. If the weekly scores are good one week and poor the next week, we can probe to determine the cause of the downturn. For example, they may have recently lost a job or fought with their spouse, which caused a drop in their self-esteem. Once we have that information, it enables us to bring a new level of care to the mentoring process.

**How Sober Peer Helps Us.** A poor score enables our counselors to improve our treatment for each student. For example, one of our students scored poorly on the survey measuring his mental health. He had low self-esteem; he was overweight and often made up stories about his accomplishments.

We are a Christian ministry, so in conjunction with Sober Peer's reporting system, we are able to provide a more detailed and area focused treatment plan for this student and all others.

**Lessons Learned.** I believe that if Sober Peer was used for my own treatment several year ago, a more focused treatment and mentoring plan could have taken place. It really would have helped during the first few months of the program when I was going through mixed emotions of anger, lack of faith, and trust in the authority over me. I believe Sober Peer could have brought to light the deeper issues that I may not have wanted to admit or discover in the first few months of treatment.

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## Sober Peer’s Foundation for Treatment— Sober Signals™

Sober Peer is **digital health technology** that delivers **the science behind the behavior** of persons who practice **risky drug and alcohol use**. After securing the client’s express permission, our mobile app collects up to 500 behavioral Sober Signals™ per day per client. These signals are gathered through the client’s interactions with the App through activities such as reporting their mood, taking surveys, making posts or comments, chatting with their counselor, completing a tele-health session, managing their trigger places, and other activities. These Sober Signals are shared in real-time and are continuously analyzed by our AI to assess, measure, predict and prescribe the best next steps. This ability to translate mountains of data into clear patterns of behavior offers deeper insights for treatment professionals and result in better advice, treatment plans, and outcomes.

Here’s an example of how this approach works in an in-patient facility. To begin treatment for substance abuse, each person using Sober Peer answers questions about their life. This information provides their coaches and counselors with a baseline of information to assess their situation, measure their progress and recommend treatment. Successive surveys help create an AI-assisted “ladders and measures science” that brings patterns of success to light as recovery techniques are applied.

Most counselors ask many of these questions in a face-to-face setting. But as every counselor knows, a person suffering from substance abuse doesn’t always answer honestly.

“Most people coming for help don’t trust authority,” says Rev. Jason Peltier, Program Manager, Teen Challenge Southeast Region. “You don’t see them opening up right off the bat. The surveys are big ‘game changers’, helping us recognize problems the student may never admit verbally.”

The questions fall into the major assessment categories of: **Discovering Hope, Deciding to Change, Finding Purpose, Thinking Differently** and **Living Healthy**. Questions include:

**Substance Use and Abuse.** Days using alcohol, heroin or other drugs in the past 30 days; days alcohol intoxication in the past 30 days.

**Employment and Income.** How much did you receive from employment in the past 30 days? How much money did you receive from illegal sources in the past 30 days?

**Ability to Travel to a Job.** Do you have an automobile and a valid driver’s license?

**Medical Condition.** Have you been troubled or bothered by your medical problems in the past 30 days?

**Legal Issues.** How serious do you feel your present legal problems are? How important is counseling for these legal problems?

**Mental Health.** Experienced serious anxiety or depression in the past 30 days?

**Family.** How many days in the past 30 have you had serious conflicts with your family? Are you satisfied with your current marital situation?

Once a person answers these questions, Sober Peer gives them a score and can begin tracking and measuring their progress. This allows for deeper insight their counselor uses to follow their progress and recommend the best treatment possible.

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**Ed DeShields** is the founder and chief executive officer of Sober Peer, a new mobile health technology platform that helps reach millions of consumers who practice risky drug or alcohol use. The platform uses artificial intelligence to produce evidence-based outcomes. Ed's expertise in this field was recognized in October 2018 at the White House when he joined 20 other business leaders to commit their expertise and organizational resources to help curb the opioid crisis.



#### **Why Did You Decide to Found Sober Peer?**

*"We need to produce better outcomes for substance use patients. And, we need to reach far more people who suffer, but cannot easily get help. During our research for this project, we demonstrated that a mobile health platform, empowered with artificial intelligence, can help people to recover and live a normal life. With our early adopter client relationships, we made it our number one goal to combine advanced mathematics and assessment tools to make it easier to treat substance abuse in the US and worldwide. We searched the world for almost every assessment tool we could find and reinvented a way to identify and communicate risky behavior. We can help many more people while lowering the cost of treatment."*

#### **What Do You Hope to Accomplish, Both Personally and Professionally?**

*"My companies have been studying consumer behavior for 20 years. In that work, we produced more than 10 million personal recovery plans based on behavioral science. That background got me interested in reinventing treatment practices. I can't think of a better way to give back than to bring that capability to the mental health space. Unfortunately, there are more than 20 million people in the US who aren't receiving adequate treatment. The use of smartphones as a delivery system means treatment is now deliverable to anyone. But we had to make the smart phone really smart and connect it a powerful big data engine. Digital health combined with analytical science is one of the most promising applications in healthcare. We have the potential to create a lasting impact on society."*

#### **Why is Sober Peer the Answer?**

*"We've created a new way to assess and treat substance use disorder. With artificial intelligence we can assess, measure and predict a person's behavior to encourage change. We can also recommend treatment guidance by recognizing patterns. Our delivery system connects patients online with health professionals, giving them 24/7 access to expanded treatment. In the past, a substance user may have seen their doctor or counselor only episodically. Now, treatment providers have an enormous amount of data at their fingertips to conduct a digital therapy session. That means they better deliver treatment in an efficient way. As a result, the cost of treatment will plummet, and outcomes will improve."*

#### **When Will Sober Peer be Available Nationwide?**

*"We are taking three actions simultaneously to bring it to market. First, there are not enough US health care professionals to treat everyone. We are communicating with 31,000 licensed professionals to recruit them to join the Sober Peer provider network. Next, we are meeting with public health officials in 30 states to demonstrate how our product works and develop strategies that can improve treatment. We connect each local treatment center into a state's digital network, allowing all providers to speak with each other. Third, we've begun a digital media strategy to put hope within reach to the 20 million people who need treatment and drive them to these healthcare providers."*

#### **Why Are You Confident Sober Peer Will Work?**

*"It's already working. By connecting the data gleaned from Sober Peer with a person's behavior, we can help improve a person's life. I'm confident it will encourage many people abusing drugs and alcohol to take their first step toward sobriety."*

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