

SIMmersion Fights Opioid Use Disorder with a Fourth Training System Designed for Peer Recovery Specialists

The new training system uses a virtual role-player who is in recovery, to help peer support specialists practice and learn to effectively set recovery goals.

COLUMBIA, MD, UNITED STATES,
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EINPresswire.com/ -- In the 12 months prior to May 2023, over 106,000 people in the U.S. died of a drug overdose. The number of deaths has been increasing at an alarming rate as shown in [Figure 1](#).

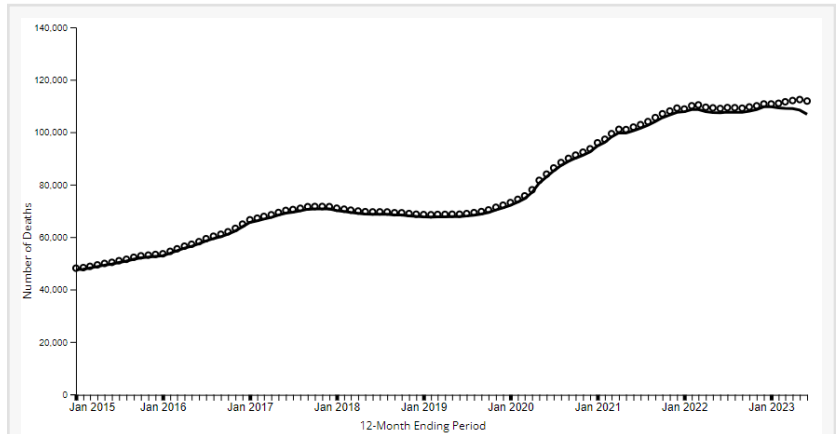


Figure 1 Overdose Death-rate in the US - January 2015 - January 2023

One of the most well-known and commonly used types of recovery support is the 12-Step model. Most of us are also familiar with the concept of Alcoholics Anonymous sponsors. “Sponsors exist to help persons in recovery work through the twelve-step model of abstinence-

based recovery and hold them accountable to the traditions of their particular 12-step fellowship.” (source MAP Health Management)

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Our suite of training systems helps peer support specialists build the skills needed to more effectively support people trying to stay engaged in the recovery process.”

Dale Olsen, Ph.D.

Peer support specialists’ job is to provide individualized support to people in recovery and play a similar, but different role than a sponsor. They are people who have been successful in the recovery process and have had relevant specialized training. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, these specialists are emerging as important members of

treatment teams. With their shared understanding, respect, and mutual empowerment, peer support specialists help people become and stay engaged in the recovery process, thereby reducing the likelihood of a relapse. Peer specialists bring their personal experiences with addiction, or mental health issues to their work. They have their own training and certification

requirements, so they need to have effective and relevant training.

Specialists cannot be expected to develop conversational skills from a PowerPoint presentation or from reading articles. [SIMmersion](#) now offers a series of four online systems, that not only provide specialist training, but also provide extensive practical experiences with virtual role-players. The first system in the series offers specialists an opportunity to practice helping role-player Jake Finney, who is someone with an opioid use disorder. Specialists practice helping him find his own reasons to stop using. The second training system in this suite offers practice providing ongoing support to role-player Paloma Alvarado by helping her focus on recovering strategies. The third system provides practice in saying “no” to Harold Melton while maintaining a positive connection. In the process of helping, specialists must maintain proper boundaries and learn to say no and explain why.

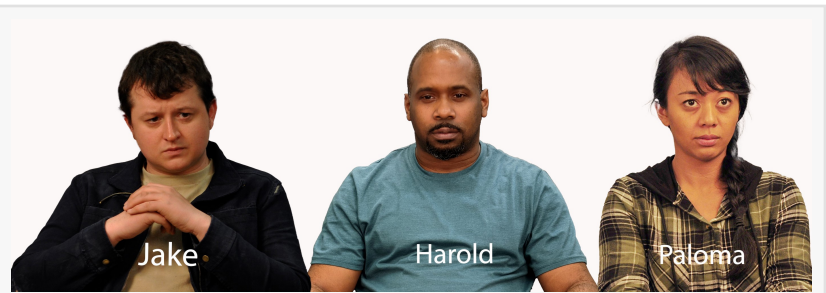


Figure 2 Virtual role-players Jake, Harold, and Paloma

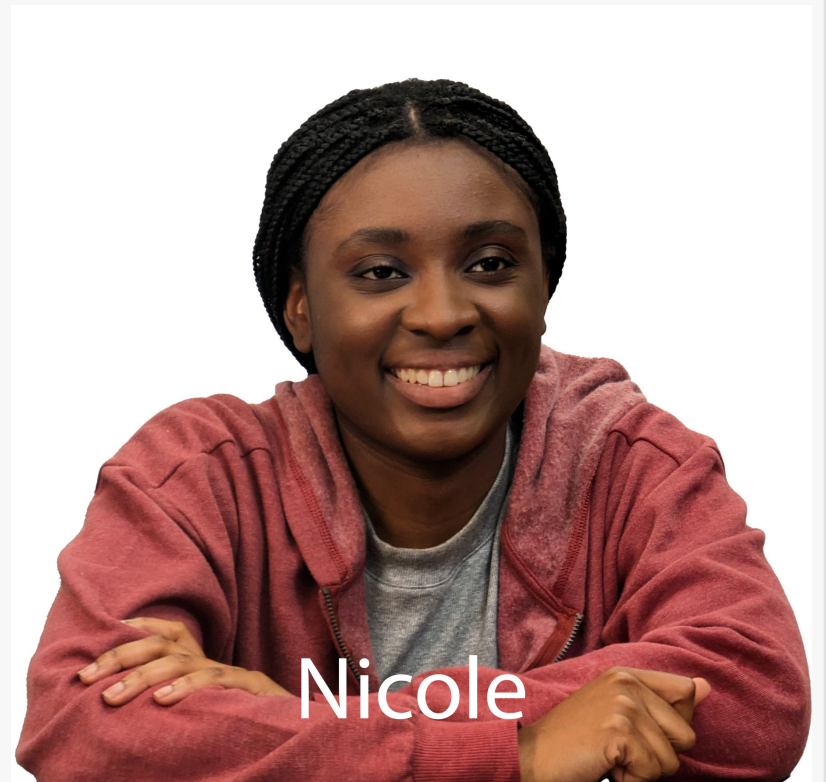


Figure 3 Role-player Nicole Davis

The [new and fourth](#) system in the suite provides practice helping Nicole Davis find recovery goals that match her interests, and motivations, while overcoming barriers. More specifically specialists will learn to:

- Focus on recovery strategies that work
- Review medication assisted recovery options
- Practice protocols for phone meeting vs. in-person meetings

This suite of training systems does much more than provide information; it provides practice with realistic virtual role-players who have simulated emotions and memory. SIMmersion’s PeopleSim technology was used to develop these virtual role-players. It has been shown to build lasting skills.

The training for setting recovery goals was supported by the Council of Southeast Pennsylvania Inc.-prevention, intervention, addiction recovery solutions. (<https://www.councilsepa.org/>). The council was funded by the Health Resources and Services Administrations (HRSA) of the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number 6 M01HP 42503-01-01. The subject content was provided by the people at the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) Program, who utilized their expertise and years of experience to make each different experience with Nicole Davis seem like a client they have worked with.

About SIMmersion

SIMmersion's mission is to train communication skills faster and more effectively by combining the world's most realistic simulation experiences with interactive training content and extensive feedback. For more information contact SIMmersion by calling 443 283 2555 or online at www.simmersion.com/contact.

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