

Certified Peer Specialist Job Description

Job Qualification:

A Certified Peer Specialist must have at least a high school diploma or equivalent and applicable training and testing as required by the Department of Mental Health, and be supervised by a qualified mental health professional as defined in Code of State Regulations.

Background:

The Certified Peer Specialist shall be considered a member of the treatment team and shall participate in staff meeting discussions regarding individual care of persons served. Certified Peer Specialists may not be assigned an independent client caseload.

The purpose of peer support services is to assist individuals served in their recovery from behavioral health disorders. The individualized treatment plan of the person served should determine the focus of this service.

Peer support services are person-centered with a recovery focus. Services allow individuals the opportunity to direct their own recovery and advocacy processes. Peer support promotes skills for coping with and managing symptoms while facilitating the utilization of natural supports and the preservation and enhancement of community living skills.

Peer support services are helping relationships between individuals and Peer Specialists that promote respect, trust, and warmth and empower individuals to make changes and decisions to enhance their lives. Peer support services are directed toward achievement of specific goals that have been defined by the person served and specified in the individualized treatment plan. Activities provided by the Peer Specialist emphasize the acquisition, development, and expansion of the rehabilitation skills needed to move forward in recovery. Interventions are built on the unique relationship between the Peer Specialist, the individual served, and his or her family unit.

Certified Peer Specialists are trained to assist their peers in the process of recovery, to help build resilience, and provide hope that recovery is possible. Recovery is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential. Resilience is defined as the ability to recover and to display courage and adaptability in the face of stress, challenge and trauma. Hope is defined as the belief that one has both the ability and the opportunity to engage in the recovery process.

Duties:

1. Assisting an individual to recover involves:
 - (a) helping an individual get in touch with what he or she thinks would improve the quality of his or her life (setting a recovery goal); and
 - (b) helping an individual identify and remove the barriers to getting that life;
2. Certified Peer Specialists use the power of peers to support, encourage, and model recovery and resilience from behavioral health disorders in ways that are specific to the needs of each individual.
 - (a) Peer support services are individual services with a rehabilitation and recovery focus;
 - (b) Peer support services promote skills for coping with and managing behavioral health disorder symptoms while encouraging the use of natural supports and enhancing community living;
 - (c) Peer Support activities assist in achieving goals and objectives set forth by the individual in their individualized treatment or recovery plan;
 - (d) Peer Support activities emphasize the opportunity for individuals to support each other as they move forward in their recovery;
3. Certified Peer Specialists interventions may include:
 - (a) sharing lived experiences of recovery, sharing and supporting the use of recovery tools and modeling successful recovery behaviors;
 - (b) helping individuals recognize their capacity for resilience;
 - (c) helping individuals to connect with other peers and with their community at large;
 - (d) helping individuals who have behavioral health disorders develop a network for information and support;
 - (e) assisting individuals who have a behavioral health disorder to make independent choices and to take a pro-active role in their treatment;
 - (f) assisting individuals with identifying strengths and personal resources to aid in their recovery; and
 - (g) helping individuals set and achieve recovery goals.
4. The job description for a Peer Specialist can include supportive activities including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Starting and sustaining mutual support and education groups;
 - (b) Promoting dialogues on recovery and resilience;
 - (c) Teaching and modeling symptom management skills;
 - (d) Teaching and modeling problem-solving skills;
 - (e) Supporting efforts to find and maintain paid employment;
 - (f) Using the stages in recovery concept to promote self-determination; and
 - (g) Assisting peers in setting goals and following through on wellness and health activities.
5. Certified Peer Specialists shall follow the Certified Peer Specialist Code of Ethics.