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Understanding Peer Support

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Overview: Understanding Peer Support

- 1. Defining Elements of Peer Support**
- 2. Optum Peer Support Engagement**
- 3. Value of Peer Support**
- 4. How to become Peer Support**



What is Peer Support:

01

Peer Support is the

“process of giving and receiving encouragement and assistance to achieve long-term Recovery”.



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What is a Peer Support Specialist?

01

A Peer Support Specialist (PSS) is an individual with the lived experience of recovery from either:

- a mental health condition
- substance use disorder
- from caring for a family member with such a condition
- and/or co-occurring conditions/(etc.)

What are some things that a Peer Support Specialist should be mindful of?

01

A Peer Support Specialist has a unique dynamic that differs from an average therapist/client relationship:

- Peer Support Specialists are not Therapists
- Peer Support Specialists need to be vocal in their own needs, and aware of the ways stress can manifest for themselves
- Peers need to establish boundaries early to minimize harm to themselves and the participant



The 5 Principles

Of Peer Support



1. Recovery Oriented

Health

Home

Purpose

Community



2. Person Centered



3. Voluntary



4. Relationship-focused



5. Trauma-informed

Understanding

Recognizing

Training

Integration

Avoiding



Core Competencies of Peer Support

What are they?

Engage peers
Provide support
Share lived experience
Personalized
Support recover planning
Link to resources
Wellness skills
Recognize signs of crisis
Communication
Teamwork
Leadership and advocacy
Growth and development

Engagement with Participants

02

Begins when a provider identifies a Medicaid participant that would potentially benefit from Peer Support Services.





Formal Support



Informal Support



My wellness plan

Name:

Date:

To me, maintaining wellness means:

My most important reasons for staying well are:

By maintaining my health and wellness, the things I'll be able to do in the future are:

Some early warning signs I need support are:

If I start to feel discouraged, I'll remind myself:

I can and will use these activities to help myself cope:

I'll make sure my environment is safe and supports my wellness with these steps:

People I trust and can ask for help

Name and phone number:

Other people/organizations important to me:

Community crisis options

PCP office

Telehealth options

Urgent care

Nurseline

Mental health crisis options

Mobile crisis team

Mental Health Crisis Text Line (24/7):
741741

National Suicide Prevention Hotline:
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Wellness Recovery Action Plan (W.R.A.P)

is a simple and powerful tool for understanding life and wellness goals for participants

Value of Peer Support

03

Benefits and Value of Peer Support Services:

- An evidence-based practice
- Shown to increase self-esteem and self-efficacy
- Reduce hospital admission rates
- Encourage emphasis on community involvement
- Increase awareness of Participant needs



“When I saw that other people recovered, it gave me hope that I could too.”

- Anonymous

7 Values of the Peer Support Professional

1. People have a right to be treated with respect dignity and have their own rights respected
2. People have a right to privacy and confidentiality
3. Self-directed recovery is possible for everyone
4. Sharing our recovery experiences fosters mutual relationships, reduces isolation, inspires hope, and strengthens the ongoing recovery process
5. People have the capacity to live the full and meaningful lives they envision for themselves
6. People have the right to make their own informed choices about treatment even if others think it is not in their best interest
7. Peer support values the importance of community building, cultural supports, and natural supports (family, church, NA, AA, Friends, etc.)



How to become a Peer Specialist

04

Peer Support Training and Education

- Peer support has been identified as an evidence-based practice
- Training and experience is required in order to work in the field
- It is common for each state to have different paths to becoming certified
- Alaska currently has two paths to certification



Types of PSS Certifications



Traditional Peer Support Professional

What is it?



Peer Support Professional

What is it?



Where can I find the information to get started on getting certified?

<https://akcertification.org/>



If I have any specific questions about certification, how may I get in touch?

[Alaska Commission for Behavioral Health Certification](#)



Other paths in getting certified

[Mental Health America](#)



**If you're interested in
providing these services,
please reach out to our
Provider Relations team.**

With a common goal of instilling
and maintaining hope...

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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