



Family Services Network Of New York Inc.

Adult Behavioral Health Home and Community Based Services Program

Position Description

Peer Support/Empowerment Specialist

Peer Support services are peer-delivered services with a rehabilitation and recovery focus. They are designed to promote skills for coping with and managing behavioral health symptoms while facilitating the utilization of natural resources and the enhancement of recovery-oriented principles (e.g. hope and self-efficacy, and community living skills). Peer support uses trauma-informed, non-clinical assistance to achieve long-term recovery from a behavioral health disorder.

Activities included must be intended to achieve the identified goals or objectives as set forth in the individuals individualized service plan, which delineates specific goals that are flexibly tailored to the participant and attempt to utilize community and natural supports. The intent of these activities is to assist individuals in initiating recovery, maintaining recovery, and enhancing the quality of personal and family life in long-term recovery.

The structured, scheduled activities provided by this service emphasize the opportunity for peers to support each other in the restoration and expansion of the skills and strategies necessary to move forward in recovery. Individuals providing these services will do so through the paradigm of the shared personal experience of recovery.

There are 6 categories of peer-support components. They include:

1. Advocacy:

- Assistance seeking and obtaining benefits and entitlements, food, shelter, permanent housing
- Assisting recipients in participating in shared decision making (e.g. MyPSYCKES)
- Linkage to and systems navigation within behavioral health and allied human services systems to access appropriate care (e.g. Peer Bridgers)
- Benefits advisement and planning
- Development of psychiatric advance directives (PAD)
- Assistance advocating for self-directed services

2. Outreach and Engagement:

- Companionship and modeling of recovery lifestyle, including participation in recovery activities that might be beyond the scope of treatment providers (e.g., eating together at a restaurant, attending or participating in a sporting event, attending a social event such as a concert or recovery celebration event)
- Raising the awareness of existing services, pathways to recovery and helping a person to remove barriers that exist for access to them
- Interim visits with individuals after discharge from Hospital Emergency Rooms, Detox Units or Inpatient Psychiatric Units to facilitate community tenure and increased readiness while waiting for the first post-discharge visit with a community-based mental health provider, treatment provider or appropriate system of care

3. Self-help tools:

- Assist selecting and utilizing self-directed recovery tools such as Relapse Prevention Planning
- Assist selecting and utilizing the things that bring a sense of passion, purpose and meaning into his/her life and coaching the person as they identify barriers to engaging in these activities



Family Services Network Of New York Inc.

Adult Behavioral Health Home and Community Based Services Program

Position Description

- Assist individuals to help connect to natural supports that enhance the quality and security of life
 - Connecting individuals to “warm lines”
 - Connections to self-help groups in the community
4. Recovery Supports:
- Recovery education and coaching for individuals and their family members
 - One to one peer support
 - Person centered goal planning that incorporates life areas such as community connectedness,
 - Assisting with skills development that guides people towards a more independent life
5. Transitional Supports:
- Bridging from Jail or prison to an individual’s home (note: that peer supports while in Jail are not Medicaid reimbursable)
 - Bridging from institutions to an individual’s home (note: that peer supports while in an institution are not Medicaid reimbursable)
 - Bridging from general hospitals to an individual’s home
 - Bridging from an individual’s home to the community
6. Pre-crisis and Crisis Supports:
- Providing companionship when an individual in an emergency room or crisis unit or preparing to be admitted to detox, residential or other service to deal with crisis
 - Providing peer support in the individual’s home or in the community to support them before (or in) a crisis or relapse
 - Developing crisis diversion plans or relapse prevention plans

Qualifications:

Peer support providers must be at least 18 years of age and have a certification as of the following:

- OMH established Certified Peer Specialist
- OASAS Certified Peer Advocate