# **Understanding Peer Support**

Rahne Smith





#### **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".



#### 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

Wellnessskills

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.



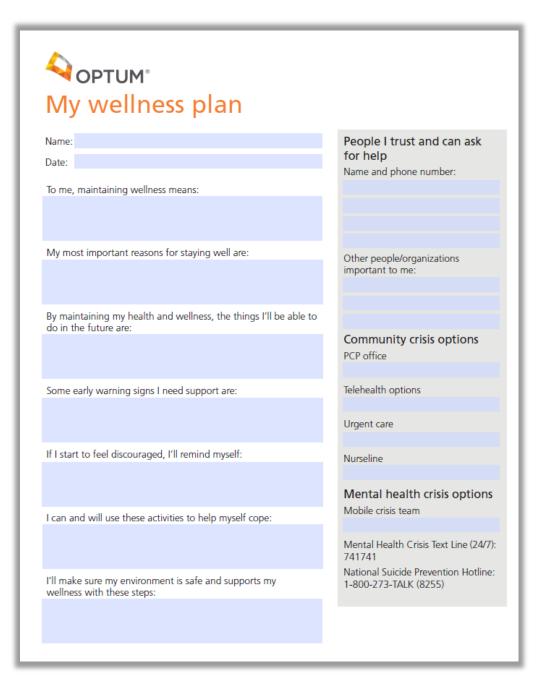


## Formal Support



## Informal Support





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
- 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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